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TO THE MEMORY OF  
THE REV<sup>d</sup> WILLIAM HOWELS

A NATIVE OF LLWYNHELG IN THE COUNTY OF  
GLAMORGAN, AND 17 YEARS MINISTER OF THE  
EPISCOPAL CHAPEL IN LONG ACRE; WHOSE  
REMAINS ARE DEPOSITED IN THE VAULT BENEATH.

HIS CHARACTER WAS MARKED BY STRENGTH  
OF INTELLECT, DELICACY OF FEELING, AND  
WARMTH OF AFFECTION.

HIS MINISTRY EVINced A PROFOUND ACQUAINTANCE  
WITH THE WANTS OF MAN, IN CONTRAST WITH THE  
INFINITE PERFECTIONS OF GOD. ALIKE UPHOLDING THE  
SOVEREIGNTY AND AUTHORITY OF THE CREATOR, AND  
THE CEASELESS RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CREATURE,  
HE EXHIBITED THE GLORES OF THE TRUE JEHOVAH  
IN THE FREEDOM OF THE COVENANT OF GRACE.

FAITHFULLY ENFORCING THE INDISSOLUBLE  
CONNECTION OF HAPPINESS WITH HOLINESS, AND OF  
MISERY WITH SIN, HE BOLDLY REPROVED ERROR  
IN PRINCIPLE AND IN PRACTICE; ILLUSTRATING  
THE HARMONY OF THE DIVINE PERFECTIONS IN THE  
SALVATION OF A SINNER, HE ENCOURAGED THE  
FEARFUL, COMFORTED THE FRIBLE MINDED,  
SUPPORTED THE WEAK.

FREE FROM GUILE HE WALKED IN HUMILITY  
BEFORE GOD, IN SIMPLICITY AND SINCERITY  
AMONG MEN; HAVING HIS CONVERSATION IN  
HEAVEN, HE EXPERIENCED IN LIFE THE POWER  
OF THE TRUTHS HE TAUGHT AND REALIZED IN  
THE APPROACH OF DEATH, THE FULL VALUE OF  
HIS LAST LESSON TO HIS FLOCK THAT ALL  
THEIR SPRINGS MUST BE IN JESUS.

HE DIED ON THE 18<sup>TH</sup> OF NOVEMBER 1832.  
IN THE 55<sup>TH</sup> YEAR OF HIS AGE.



# S E R M O N S

BY

✓  
THE LATE REV. WILLIAM HOWELS,

MINISTER OF LONG ACRE EPISCOPAL CHAPEL.

VOL. II.

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON :

J. HATCHARD AND SON, 187, PICCADILLY.

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1834.





# P R E F A C E

TO THE FIRST EDITION.

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It was my intention, in the first instance, to have published, in a single volume, a Memoir of Mr. Howels, with some Sermons at length, the substance of others, and a number of detached Remarks on various passages of Scripture and points of theology. The time, however, required for the writing of the Memoir, and the selection and arrangement of the materials placed in my hands, might have postponed the publication longer than would be desirable ; while the quantity of interesting matter, with which I have been favoured, is such as to make it impossible that the work should be confined to the limits originally intended. I have therefore altered my plan ; and with a view to meet the anxious desire which I know to exist, of possessing at once some memorials of a ministry so highly and justly

esteemed, and at the same time, to render the Work itself eventually more complete, I have selected for the present volume that which could be published with the least delay; reserving for another, the substance of several Sermons; the detached passages to which I have alluded; a number of the notes or skeleton Sermons from which Mr. Howels preached; and the Memoir prefixed.

As no part of what is now published was prepared for the press by Mr. Howels himself, a few explanatory observations are requisite. Owing to the peculiar state of his bodily health, and other causes, to which I may refer more particularly in the proposed Memoir, Mr. Howels was, to a greater extent than almost any minister, an extempore preacher. It is obvious, that under such circumstances, some expressions might be used by him which he would not himself have written; and what might be delivered with effect to his own congregation, would not always wear the dress in which it might properly appear in print: and therefore, though nothing has in any instance been added, some expres-

sions have been omitted, and some occasionally altered. The series on the Lord's Prayer were taken in short-hand by several individuals, two of whom have kindly favoured me with their copies ; and the notes from which they were preached having been preserved by Mr. Howels, I am enabled to assure the reader, that the Sermons, as printed, agree in substance with what he prepared for the pulpit. The same means of proving the correctness of the rest of this volume have not been afforded ; but several of the latter Sermons are printed from the manuscripts of the same friends, whose ascertained accuracy in the former series would afford a strong assurance of the correctness of these, even if other means of establishing their identity did not exist. The Sermon "on the Sympathy of Christ" having been preached on a special occasion, several copies of it were taken by various hands ; and these having been carefully collated, little doubt can be entertained that what is now published is correct. Indeed Mr. Howels himself is believed to have expressed his satisfaction with the copy which has been chiefly adopted.

Mr. Howels having preached on the subject of the Lord's Supper, on the morning of the first Sunday in several successive months, preparatory to the establishment of a weekly sacrament in his chapel; and the Sermons as taken in shorthand, having been preserved; the substance of these is printed at the close of this volume: but as the original matter has been a good deal abridged, chiefly to avoid repetition, and the arrangement in some degree altered, it has been found convenient to adopt the form of a Treatise, rather than attempt to adhere to the original division of separate Sermons.

I have felt the less reluctance to the publishing of this volume in its present state, because it will be found to embrace a large portion of those subjects which are of primary importance; almost all those which occupied a prominent place in Mr. Howels' ministry, being here either directly or incidentally discussed.

It will be borne in mind, that however powerful in expression, and simple in eloquence, particular passages in these Sermons may be, and many undoubtedly are so, in this does not con-

sist their chief merit. They are not presented as specimens of composition or of style, to which, perhaps, Mr. Howels might be thought by some to be rather too inattentive. It is to the clear, forcible, uncompromising statements and vindication of truth which they contain; to the illustrations of Scripture which they supply; the exhortations of wisdom and affection with which they abound; and to their exhibition of the divine attributes and perfections, harmonizing in the punishment of sin, and the salvation of him that believeth in Jesus; that the attention of the reader is directed.

With these few remarks I offer the present volume to the affectionate recollection of the hearers of Mr. Howels, and to the respectful attention of all.

CHARLES BOWDLER.

*March, 1833.*

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*Note.—The Volume has been carefully revised, and several new Sermons are now added.*

*August, 1834.*

*The following are the names of those who have contributed towards the expense of the Tablet in Trinity Church.*

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*All the Minister's Fees, both for the Funeral and the Tablet, were remitted.*

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# S E R M O N S.

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## SERMON I.

### O N P R A Y E R.

MATT. vi. 9.

*After this manner therefore pray ye.*

THIS sermon is only introductory to a series of discourses, which it is my intention, by the blessing of God, to preach from that interesting portion of Divine Writ, commonly called the Lord's Prayer.

This prayer evinces itself, by its excellence, to be from God. It has, evidently, its source in infinite Wisdom, and infinite Love.

I. I shall consider, first,—WHAT IS PRAYER?

If I were asked to define prayer, I should call it the ascent of the human heart to God—the ascent of the heart, with all its wants, with all its sins, with

all its misery. We cannot be divested of any thing that is evil, but in the bosom of our heavenly Father. It requires the power of Omnipotence, every moment, to deliver us from all evil, and to invest us with every good. May we know then, individually, what it is thus to ascend to God !

The instruction for prayer is very short and comprehensive : “ Pour out your heart before him.” (Ps. lxii. 8.) Give it up with all its desires ; keep nothing back.

We find something analogous to prayer even in the brute creation. Every thing that possesses animal life, seeks its welfare under what we call instinct ; which, though inexplicable to us, must be traced to God as its source. From our acquaintance with the brute creation, we know, that when they have once experienced the kindness of man, they never afterwards fail to look up to him for a repetition of it. The individual who has once tasted that the Lord is gracious, will never look any where else for the satisfaction of the desires of his immortal spirit ; he will be conscious that finite being cannot afford any thing that has even a tendency to satisfy him. We were created, originally, to be satisfied with nothing short of God himself ; and prayer was intended by the Almighty to express our return to him, and the consciousness of his all-sufficiency. Notwithstanding our imperfection and indeliberate, we are to

approach him in prayer, assured of being heard by him. No prayer was ever put up in simplicity and sincerity to God, without receiving an answer. How is this to be proved? It sweetens the disposition, and strengthens the mind. If we are not unjust to ourselves—if we honour his word—we shall approach him in prayer, assured of being heard by him. Nothing is more certain than that God hears and answers prayer. “This is the confidence that we have in him,” says the apostle, “that if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: and if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.” (1John v. 14, 15.)

II. I proceed, in the second place, to consider  
THE DIFFERENT KINDS OF PRAYER.

1. *Public Prayer.* God is eminently honoured by the public assemblies of his saints; for he “loveth the gates of Zion, more than all the dwellings of Jacob.” (Ps. lxxxvii. 2.) The assembly of the family of heaven here upon earth bears a greater resemblance than any thing else to the worship which God receives above. Indeed it is a truism in the minds of those who have paid attention to the bible, that nothing can be more delightful to the Lord than the assembly of his saints; and, as God is a God of order, it is very desirable that this should be carried on with

the utmost reverence and regularity. You are unjust to yourselves, and ungrateful to God, in coming late to his house of prayer. I mention this in the most respectful and affectionate manner; for I should be unworthy of my sacred profession, and of the interesting and important trust committed to me, if I were to shrink from any duty that has a tendency to promote your welfare. Let me entreat you to exert every effort to be present at the commencement of the worship of God; that we may begin and end together—that all our hearts may ascend *as one* into the presence of God. And remember, that God hears your prayers, not as individuals, but as a congregation. In all ages, the church of God has, on various occasions, met together; begun their worship at a stated hour, and ended at a certain period, unless it were more than usually prolonged by the effusion of the divine Spirit. In the name of the Lord, then, as well as for the welfare of your own souls, I invite you to be as early and regular as you possibly can, in your attendance at the public services of the church.

2. Prayer may be considered, secondly, in connexion with *family worship*.

As prayer involves an eminent part of the worship of the living God, one observation will apply universally. Let it be carried on so as to preserve as much as may be possible, the spirit of prayer — the genuine spirit of worship. And



I recommend brevity. I think it much better, much wiser, so to engage in this duty, as that children and servants may. rise from the service, saying, "how soon it is ended;" rather than by long chapters, long expositions, and lengthened prayers, to be sent from the room wearied and disgusted. It is painful, to see servants tired out with the work of the day, wearied afterwards with worship unseasonably prolonged. One of the most eminent ministers I ever knew, was never more than fifteen minutes in family worship. However, I do not wish to limit you to *minutes*, though I have the highest authority for recommending brevity. "When you pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him." (Matt. vi. 7, 8.)

Most of the prayers in Scripture are very short, and very comprehensive. The longest on record is that of Solomon at the consecration of the temple. But Solomon, in this prayer, was an eminent type of Jesus Christ, in his intercession above. The glory of the Lord filled the house, and Solomon was left alone addressing the King of kings.

3. I consider, thirdly, prayer *in the closet*. We find that the saints of old had their stated pe-

riods, their regular hours, for waiting on God in secret. Let the periods be fixed, and so fixed as to expose you to the least interruption possible. The first thing in the morning certainly, and the last at night. We read of holy Daniel, that he was in the habit of calling on God three times a day. When the day of trial arrived, he opened his windows, and prayed as aforetime, looking towards the temple, the type of the Saviour: the holy man of God did not seem to be ruffled in the least degree; all was calmness and composure; proving that he had been in the daily habit of flying constantly from earth to heaven, to the bosom of his Father, and his God. He who is intimately conversant with God, cannot fear evil tidings from any quarter.

4. I would touch on *mental prayer*. It is desirable, above all things, that the human heart, under the discipline of the Holy Spirit, should be ever kept in a praying frame: "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance, and supplication for all saints." (Eph. vi. 18.) This spirit does not, in the least degree, militate against cheerfulness, provided that cheerfulness be perfectly innocent. Let nothing be indulged in, for a single second of time, that you would be ashamed of in the presence of the living God.

Under this division I would consider *holy ejaculations*--prayer that frequently darts from earth

to heaven, unknown to Satan himself, bringing back an answer that shields the petitioner from the attacks of the arch-enemy, and renders him triumphant in the hour of trial.

III. In the third place, let me call your attention to THE BEING ADDRESSED IN PRAYER.

1. Negatively considered, the Object addressed is no image. According to the express command of God, all images that resemble any thing in heaven, on earth, or in the waters under the earth, are forbidden. Roman Catholics tell us that they do not adore images, as such; but merely use them to fix the attention, and remind them of that which they symbolize. Let it be admitted that they are used with this view: I only ask, can any excuse whatever be available for violating the express command of God? Besides, there is a folly in it in this respect; that nothing presented to our senses can give us any idea of the Saviour's exaltation and intercession. It is calculated only to mislead.

2. Saints and angels are not to be invoked. They cannot hear us, and if they could, they cannot help us. The absurdity of such worship is only equalled by its sin.

*God, and God alone, is the object of worship, whether we consider the divine perfections, or our individual wants. "Should not a people seek unto their God?" (Isa. viii. 19.)*

1. Because he is *omnipresent*. “Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.” (Ps. cxxxix. 7—10.) He is with us, and in us perpetually; for “in him we live and move and have our being.” “The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth.” (Psa. cxlv. 18.)

2. Necessarily connected with the omnipresence, is the *omniscience* of Deity. Deity alone is to be addressed in prayer; because he alone sees the inmost recesses of the human heart, and knows all our wants before we give them expression in words. Hence Solomon, in his intercession for the Jewish people, thus expresses himself: “What prayer and supplication soever be made by any man, or by all thy people Israel, which shall know every man the plague of his own heart, and spread forth his hands toward this house; then hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive, and do, and give to every man according to his ways, whose heart thou knowest; for *thou*, even *thou only*, knowest the hearts of all the children of men.” (1 Kings viii. 38, 39.)

3. God alone is to be addressed in prayer, because he is *omnipotent*. He alone is *able* to an-

swer our prayer, and confer upon us every blessing we need. We must receive every thing that is necessary to make us truly happy, immediately from him. He has appointed the necessary means, and he will ever crown the diligent use of them with his own blessing.

4. Prayer is an act of worship due to God, and to God only. If *prayer* be addressed to images, then every thing else ought to be presented likewise. Awful inconsistency and folly ! Worship is due to God alone ; and he who refuses it, will for ever rue the consequences.

IV. I consider, in the fourth place, IN WHOSE NAME WE ARE TO APPROACH GOD. IN JESUS CHRIST ; in his person, and in all the glory of his work : for this obvious reason, merit is exclusively his own. No finite being has ever merited, or can ever merit, any thing at the hands of God ; no, not even the highest intelligence in heaven : hence the necessity of a divine Person, not only to atone for sin, but to be our Saviour, our Intercessor, our Judge in the last day, and our Preserver for ever and ever.

The Saviour tells his disciples, “ If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.” (John xiv. 14.) Nothing can give us a higher idea of his merit, or of the prevalence of his intercession. All things are his ; his family are his ; and all blessings are his. His family are his essentially,

and his by purchase. "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." (Coloss. ii. 9.) "For it pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell." (Coloss. i. 19.) "Of his fulness have all we received." (John i. 16.) All our temporal, as well as all our spiritual blessings, emanate from him. The bread we eat, and the water we drink, are the purchase of his infinitely precious blood. He gives us our daily bread, as a covenant blessing; and, were we truly wise, all we think, or say, or do, would involve an act of worship to God, for the gift of such a Saviour, and such blessings in him.

V. Prayer is to be offered under THE INFLUENCE OF GOD THE HOLY GHOST. "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought." (Rom. viii. 26.) Without him we can do nothing; and if acquainted with our own hearts, the experience of each must echo this declaration. We know not even for what to ask, and we know not the spirit in which it ought to be asked, without the ceaseless influence of God the Holy Ghost. God has often wounded the feelings of nature, that men might be induced to approach him in prayer; and the simple cry of distressed nature has often issued in the gracious communication of holy and spiritual gifts. Many a time they have discovered afterwards that in their first approach

to God, they were utterly destitute of the least particle of spirituality; but misery pressed heavily upon them, while eternal destruction opened beneath their feet; distressed nature burst forth in prayer; and while that prayer only involved a consideration of self, God answered it in a way infinitely worthy of himself, by pouring out upon the petitioners his most gracious gift, even his Holy Spirit—a blessing previously unknown, and unsought.

Prayer is likewise to be made for all men. We are members of a community; and we are to remember this in our prayers. We have neighbours, by comparing whose lives with the declaration of God's word, we must be aware that they are in a state of condemnation before him. It is God's express command that his church should pray for all men; the apostle insists upon it in his epistle to Timothy. (1 Tim. ii. 1, 2.)

VI. Lastly, consider THE MANY OBLIGATIONS WE ARE UNDER TO PRAY TO GOD.

1. The *command* of God. The Saviour says, "That men ought always to pray and not to faint." (Luke xviii. 1.) The apostle Paul exhorts us to "pray without ceasing;" and we cannot possibly violate this command without being unjust to ourselves, and without being guilty of rebellion against the King of kings. From the



command alone we might have inferred that he would answer prayer, if we had not had,

2. The *promises* of God. These impose on us another obligation to pray to him; and they were intended to encourage us to do so. “Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.” (Ps. l. 15.) “Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am.” (Isa. lviii. 9.) “They shall call on my name, and I will hear them.” (Zech. xiii. 9.) “Ask, and it shall be given you.” (Matt. vii. 7.)

3. *The Spirit of adoption which God has given to us.* The gift of the Holy Spirit involves in it new obligations, *as well as the delights peculiar to itself.* “Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father,” (Gal. iv. 6.) But it may be asked, How am I to know that I address God, that I wait upon him, and look up to him as my Father? Take one infallible evidence. He who knows and feels that God is his Father, can no more live without prayer, than he can exist without his daily food. Hunger and thirst, if we neglect our frail frames, compel us to seek supplies: so hunger and thirst after righteousness, oblige the child of God to wait on his heavenly Father. Real prayer is the breath of the soul—it is the language of God within us—the address of one divine Person to another;



and surely this ought to render the exercise most eminently interesting to us ; while it should teach us to deprecate the idea of doing any thing, except under the influence of the living God.

4. *The wisdom of prayer.* The chief blessing is primarily and perpetually kept in view, spirituality. The things of time and sense occupy, invariably, the second place in the heart of him who is born of God : and the consciousness of this is a striking evidence of being interested in the covenant of Christ, and consequently in all the blessings comprised in it. “Covet earnestly the best gifts ;” and they are the renovating influences of the Holy Spirit. It is to encourage us to wait upon God that the assurance is given : “Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.” (Phil. i. 6.) The certainty of the possession of the prize, affords the strongest encouragement to the believer to persevere, in spite of all intervening obstacles. Some presume to say that this doctrine tends to licentiousness ; I ask, who is the best judge of truth, and the effects of truth—God or man ? “I will hear what God the Lord will speak ; for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints ; but let them not turn again to folly.” (Ps. lxxxv. 8.)

Learn a few lessons.

1. That prayerless individuals and prayerless

families are, in Scripture, marked and denounced in the most awful manner. "Pour out thy fury upon the heathen that know thee not—and upon the families that call not upon thy name." (Jer. x. 25.) Are there any of you living without prayer? I address you as families and as individuals. God and man are against you! God, and his Christ, and his church are against you—O think of these things!

2. Remember that the prayer of the believer involves in it a blessing to himself, as well as to others. He cannot pray as he ought to pray, without a blessing from God. Prayer for others is one striking proof that we pray rightly for ourselves. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." (James v. 16.)

3. And lastly. Consider the high destiny of prayer. It is to lose itself for ever in praise. The principle will live in heaven, but prayer will be lost in praise: persevere in prayer then; pray as long as you live. Ask God for spiritual blessings; and have no taste to choose any thing earthly for yourselves: remembering this—that the voice of prayer ascending from earth to heaven, has in it more music in the ears of God, than all the songs of the angelic hosts.

## SERMON II.

## ON PRAYER.

MATT. vi. 9.

*After this manner therefore pray ye.*

WE are at a loss, when we peruse the volume of Inspiration, which to admire most, the goodness, or the wisdom of God. They both shine in infinite glory; giving us instruction in every manner in which it can possibly reach us.

Some teachers are celebrated for communicating instruction by one method, and some by another; but our Saviour communicates it in every possible mode; while each that he adopts presents us with perfection.

God himself indited prayers for his family in the Old Testament; the Saviour has indited a prayer in the New Testament. Infinite goodness and infinite wisdom compassionate our weakness and ignorance in teaching us how to approach God. Individuals sometimes tell us, 'I know not how to pray, I know not how to

express myself.' To this I answer, 'God teaches you how to pray, and what to say to him in prayer.'

I. In the first place, let me direct your attention to THE PRAYER WHICH WILL BE HEARD BY GOD—the prayer which he has promised to hear.

1. The *prayer of faith* will certainly be heard. Faith not only believes in the infinite power of God, but, at the same time, in his infinite willingness to hear those who pray. The prayer of faith may sometimes mistake its object; but when it does, God gives an answer, though it may not be what has been asked. God sometimes says, "No;" but when he does, he gives something far better than the request. The Saviour tells his disciples, "All things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." (Matt. xxi. 22.) Now the believer asks, Who is the Saviour? Faith immediately fixes its eye on the dignity of his person, and the worth of his sacrifice—the person and the sacrifice of God! and the believer knows that he must prevail.

2. The *prayer of the heart* will be heard. God will have *the whole man engaged in prayer*: and this is the honest desire of every true believer. God, in the Old Testament, addressing his family, thus speaks to them: "Ye shall seek me and find me, when ye shall search for me with *all*

*your heart.*" (Jer. xxix. 13.) There is no being worthy of the whole heart but God. Man, weak and limited as his faculties are, yet, if we take him in his full dimensions, finds no one capable of comprising him in all his wants, but God. The individual who has been disciplined by the Holy Spirit to know himself as a sinner—Christ as a Saviour—the Holy Spirit as a Sanctifier—and the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ as his God and Father—will seek him with the whole heart.

Many individuals are afraid to pray, because they feel a great deal of selfishness in their prayers. God intended self-love to be in our prayers. The individual who knows his own wants, will take self with him to a throne of grace—he is infinitely welcome. God intends, without exception, that in the whole circle of worship we should invariably seek our own interest. Obedience to God involves the welfare of the creature, and will do so for ever. Seek the blessings God intended that you should possess. Let your prayer be that you may possess them *all*; they are absolutely necessary to renovate the human heart, that it may be brought to, and preserved in, a state of spotless purity for ever and ever. May this be the language of every heart, unworthy as it is in itself; 'No one is worthy of my heart—no one is capable of receiving it, but God.' Finite being cannot receive the whole

of man. Give yourselves, then, wholly to God. Leviathan must have his native element. God is the element of his family; they cannot live but in him. Let him have the heart, then, as well as the head; not the intellect only, but the affections; indeed he cannot possess the one without the other. O God, take full possession of us individually!

3. The *prayer of humility* will invariably be heard. "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble." (James iv. 6.) The humble exalt God, while they feel that they cannot abase themselves too much. My opinion is, that saints and angels in heaven are not as humble as they would wish to be; while each is anxious to be lower than the other. Where this principle lives, it must be heaven. The individual who is humble, proves, in the exercise of his humility, that the mighty hand of God is upon him. Man is such a monster in pride, that no one but God can bring him down. The aggregate of finite being cannot do it. All the calamities of time, all the miseries of eternity cannot do it. The prayer of God's family ascends from the *dust*; *they* no longer usurp the throne of Deity, no longer attempt to rob him of his crown; but sink into nothing before him, aye, into less than nothing. Pure beings, who have never violated the holy law of God, are *nothing* before him: they who have transgressed his holy law are *less* than no-

thing ; as, in a pecuniary point of view, one who has no money, and is in debt, is worth less than nothing. Pure beings above have nothing of their own but imperfection ; and imperfection will ever be predicable of finite being. O may God of his infinite goodness and mercy, teach us to know that we are sinners, and give us to view his glory in the redemption and salvation of fallen man. May we be individually led to Calvary, to behold the Saviour dying the just for the unjust ; and we shall be, *of necessity*, humbled in the dust, while our destiny is to be eternally exalted !

4. The *prayer of industry and diligence* will be heard. We ought not to allow ourselves in idleness or slothfulness. It is a disgrace to a man to be idle and slothful even in earthly concerns. Industry and diligence become man in every thing wherein he is lawfully engaged ; above all, in his intercourse with Heaven. “The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing : but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat.” (Prov. xiii. 4.) In the name of all the divine perfections—in the name of every lovely principle that can inhabit the human bosom—I conjure you to be frequent and fervent at the throne of grace !

5. The *prayer of honesty* will be heard by God. By honesty, I mean a desire to forsake all sin, without one single exception ; and a desire to possess every good which God has pro-



vided for man in his holy covenant. These things are absolutely necessary to constitute spiritual honesty. The apostle James says to some, "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask *amiss*, that ye may consume it upon your lusts." (James iv. 3.) They exclude God from their prayers; their prayers are filled with *exclusive* selfishness, and an answer to such prayers would be a dishonour to God, and no benefit, but rather a curse to them.

May we search ourselves individually, in the presence of the living God. I do not ask you what bitter conflicts you may have had within your bosoms; but I do ask you, in the name of the God of heaven and earth, is it, in the midst of all, your desire to abandon every thing that is contrary to his will, and to seek every thing in conformity with it? The Jews of old seem to have understood this, the spiritual Jews especially. Read the ninth chapter of John, and attend to that excellent divine, the blind man who had been restored. The Pharisees say, "We know that God spake unto Moses; as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is." (ver. 29, &c.) "The man answered and said unto them, Why herein is a *marvellous thing*, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet *he hath opened mine eyes*." No one could reason better: "Now we know that God heareth not sinners," that is, those who go on in a wilful course of iniquity; there



is a distinction to be made between the individual who only draws nigh to God with his mouth, while his heart is engaged with idols, and another who approaches him fighting against his sins; "but if any man be a worshipper of God and doeth his will, him he heareth. Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this man were *not of God*, he could do nothing." Admirable! This individual seems to have understood well what spiritual integrity was. He seems to have felt what was the nature of that prayer which would be heard of God.

6. The *prayer of filial fear* is invariably heard by God. One reason why the spirit of adoption is conferred by God is, that it may be a spirit of grace and supplication. The children of Israel are represented in Scripture as coming to God with "weeping and supplications," (Jer. xxxi. 9,) the genuine spirit of a child.

The Lord, in describing what this fear is, tells us that he "taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy." "He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him, he also will hear their cry, and will help them." (Ps. cxlvii. 11.; cxlv. 19.)

Let it be remembered in all I have said, that I am contending for the *reality*, not for the

strength or degree of the reality. Nor am I contending for principles *exclusively* ; I mean principles that have no enemies to contend with. God hears the lisping voice of infancy, as well as the voice of manhood in the day of grace. He despiseth not the day of small things. He knows that there are many enemies within the human heart ; and the man who is honestly desirous of being delivered from them will be heard by God : “ Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance, and supplication for all saints.” (Ephes. vi. 18.)

II. But as unbelief is strong within the human bosom—stronger than we are aware of—it is necessary to bring proofs of THE CERTAINTY THAT PRAYER WILL BE ANSWERED.

This may be proved from

1. The *mercy* of God. The mercy of God excludes no prayer of misery on this side hell. Exclusion is the sinner's work. Many desire to know the secret purposes of God before they can open their lips in prayer : this is presumption. It is enough to know that his mercy is infinite, and that we are individually welcome to him. “ The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting.” (Ps. ciii. 17.) “ He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise

their prayer.” (Ps. cii. 17.) “The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.” (Ps. ciii. 8.)

2. The *faithfulness* of God. Indeed I could show how all the divine perfections prove the same thing, for each is as glorious as the other in the redemption and salvation of fallen man. “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is *faithful* and *just* to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John i. 9.) We sometimes fear his justice, while we court his mercy. God is not honoured by this. No : unless I were assured that justice is as much the sinner’s friend as mercy, I should never have courage to approach God.

3. The *intercession of Jesus Christ*. Here, all the divine perfections present themselves to the Father in the person of the Son :—infinity demanding justice to *itself* in interceding for sinners. The apostle Paul was alive to this truth, and made a wise and holy use of it : “Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities ; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore *come boldly* unto the throne of grace,

that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." (Heb. iv. 14—16.) Messiah is above, interceding for his family, collectively and individually.

4. Necessarily and intimately connected with this, and to which I have just alluded is, that *the Spirit of the Father and the Son is a Spirit of grace and supplication within our bosoms*. With this divine Spirit in our hearts, what enemy can possibly prevail against us? Not one: they are all destined to fall, and we are destined to be more than conquerors, through him that loved us, and washed us in his blood.

III. I shall bring forward SOME EXAMPLES OF SUCCESS. I have said that instruction is presented to us in every possible mode in the book of God. We have, particularly, the examples of others; and we never can be sufficiently grateful to the God of all mercy and grace for them. We like to see a thing exemplified. The *description* of a machine is not enough for an inquisitive individual; he should see the machine itself, and at work too, if possible, to have a correct idea of the ingenuity of the inventor, and the success of the invention. Those whose histories are recorded in scripture were like ourselves; they had the same enemies to contend with; they were placed just as we are; and yet

they have triumphed. Their histories are given to encourage us to approach God at all times, in all places, and under all circumstances.

A sick man, sometimes, will hardly hear of a physician being called in. No persuasion, no entreaty will avail; he will not suffer him to be sent for. At last a friend comes in and tells him, "I was much worse than you are, and the physician has cured me." This gives the sick man confidence; he puts himself under his care, and soon experiences the good effects—he is restored to perfect health. I view the examples of scripture in this light. The simplicity of the saints of old was such, that they seemed to set about nothing without first consulting God. If truly wise, we shall be like them.

1. The first example to which I refer you, is, that of *Abraham's servant*, when he was instructed to go and search out a wife for Isaac. (Gen. xxiv. 7.) He begins, like a truly wise and pious servant, with prayer to God. And if any of you, my young friends, desire a wife, seek her of the Lord first of all. If you are truly wise, you will trust yourselves in nothing; but seek daily prudence, as a daily blessing, at the hands of God, that you may not disgrace your profession. Imitate Abraham's servant.

2. The *example of Jacob*, when he dreaded Esau's wrath, as we read in the thirty-second of Genesis, where we also read of his wrestling

with the angel. He would not be silenced even by the angel of the covenant. He persevered till he was in possession of the blessing; and Esau was immediately pacified. Make God your friend, and you may rest assured you will have no enemy who can really injure you. "When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him."

3. The *prayer of Hannah* affords us a rich and instructive lesson. Imitate her, ye mothers! "O Lord of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but will give unto thine handmaid a man-child; then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life." (1 Sam. i. 11.) Here is a mother! O give your children to the Lord! She prayed for Samuel before he was born; before he was called into existence, she gave him to the Lord. The grace of God certainly took possession of his heart when very young. Many parents wish to have children to take possession of their estates, to sustain, what they call, the dignity of their houses. Hannah ascends above them all; *she* wished to have a child only that she might give him to the Lord.

4. The *prayer of Jabez*: "And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, O that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou



wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me. And God granted that which he requested.” (1 Chron. iv. 10.)

5. The *prayers of the children of Israel*. These averted again and again the judgments of God. “When they in their trouble did turn unto the Lord God of Israel, and sought him, he was found of them.” (2 Chron. xv. 4.)

6. Read the *prayer of David* in the cave ; (Psal. cxlii.) of *Elisha* among his enemies ; (2 Kings vi. 17 ; ) of *Jeremiah* in prison, and in the midst of troubles ; (Jer. xxxii.) of *Daniel* cast into the den of lions, (Dan. ix.)—and see how the Lord heard and answered prayer. But some one may be disposed to say, (and it is the duty of the ministers of the gospel to meet all cases,) ‘This is not my case ; I have involved myself in difficulties by my own sin ; what is the use of my prayer ?’ My brother, my sister, I have the authority of scripture to invite you to pray. Read the history of obstinate Jonah, who, though armed with rebellion and perverseness, when in the midst of his distress, after he had brought the calamity upon himself, prayed unto the Lord ; and the Lord delivered him. “Out of the belly of hell, cried I,” said Jonah. (Jonah ii.) It is impossible to conceive more awful circumstances than those in which he was placed ; no one was ever similarly circumstanced ; yet, desperate as was his case, he cried, and the Lord heard and

delivered him. These things are written to give us every possible encouragement to approach the Lord.

IV. Consider the RULE OF PRAYER. Let all the prayers we find in scripture, that have been preferred to God, and answered by him, be our patterns. With these in our hands, we shall never be at a loss for words; we may be at a loss for words to make a show of ourselves in public, and a very good loss it will be; but we shall never want for words to approach the Lord.

All the prayers recorded in scripture as indited by the Spirit of the living God, indicative of our wants, and of his readiness to supply them, are so excellent as to be without the least alloy of imperfection: nevertheless none of them are to be compared as a whole, and as a model, with the Lord's Prayer. "After this manner," said our Lord, "pray ye," and then he proceeds: "Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven: give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors: and lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil: for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen."

Consider this prayer as a model or pattern,



and as a form. As a model, that you may pray for the same blessings, though in different words : and besides this, I would recommend the use of it as a form. Some dissenters constantly reject it as a form, doubtless to their own injury. I once asked a dissenting friend why he did not use the Lord's Prayer. Because, he said, it did not seem to be presented in the Lord's own name. But is not this objection groundless? Was there, I ask, any prayer ever acceptably presented to God but in his name, from the first prayer when true religion appeared in Eden to the present day? But our Lord in an especial manner places himself at the head of this prayer: "Our Father." He is, as I have often observed, the first of worshippers, as well as the first of kings. He is worshipped as a king while interceding for his people; and his own humanity worships God, while he intercedes for us in all his glory—as a divine person demanding, in justice at the hands of the Father, what is in mercy to be imparted to us.

The words of this prayer are very few, and its matter very comprehensive. As a prayer, it is unrivalled. It contains all that we want, and in effect all that God wishes to hear from our lips. If there were nothing else in the Bible expressive of the dignity of the Saviour's person, of the glory of his work, and of the infinite benevolence of his disposition, this prayer alone would be sufficient. It evidently proves itself to have emanated from

the bosom of infinite Wisdom and infinite Love ; from the bosom of one who knew man to perfection, because he knew God to perfection. Model your prayers by this prayer ; it begins with every thing which involves the glory of God, and ends with every thing that comprises the good of man. May God of his goodness and mercy write it in all our hearts !

But there may be some whose cases I have not yet reached ; let them attend while I address them in the application of my sermon.

1. Sickness may derange the human frame very much ; it may reduce it to such a state that it is hardly capable of communion with the Lord, unless in a very eminent degree under the influence of the Holy Spirit. We should attend to this. Some have ascribed to their own wilful acts, what only proceeds from bodily disease. Let it be remembered, they are the Lord's still—invariably in his bosom, though not always conscious of it. In this state of mind they are frequently made the objects of Satan's attacks and temptations. Remember, it is your privilege as well as duty, though perhaps in the midst of much suffering, to be looking up to God for deliverance ; and that in his own time, and in his own way, he will appear in your hearts individually.

2. Sometimes internal and external trials stupify the soul, and the individual thinks that

God is about to destroy him. Listen not to such a suggestion. At all times, in all places, under all circumstances, pray to God. Pray, when you cannot pray !

3. Another case is—the insensibility of the human heart and a rebelliousness of spirit, quarrelling with God in all his dispensations. *These* are some of the severe things his people suffer ; and they are tempted perhaps at times to say, I am a hypocrite in grace : would you pray then ?—Yes. The prayer of faith is destined to penetrate the thickest cloud, and eventually to dispel it.

Lastly. Let it be remembered that God is infinitely worthy of being addressed at all times ; even when we are not at all convinced of our own sincerity. *I dare not wait till I am convinced of it.* Perhaps some of you will think of this. Let your circumstances be what they may, never be silent before God. You have not a good heart —God can give you one. You have nothing but sin—the dead in trespasses and sins are those whom God quickens. You have insulted God again and again—that is the reason why you ought to seek his pardon. Your heart is as hard as adamant—God can soften it. Be determined to lay siege to the throne of heaven ; and never be silent till your prayers are heard and answered.

## SERMON III.

ON THE LORD'S PRAYER.

MATT. vi. 9.

*Our Father which art in heaven.*

GOD is the parent of the universe. He is not only the author, but the preserver of every thing that is good—the author and preserver of good exclusively ; overruling evil, indeed, for the best and wisest purposes, as will be evident in a very short time ; annihilating evil in the bosoms of his friends, and punishing it in his enemies, for ever. But he is the parent of his human family in the highest sense. The relationship subsisting between God and his church in Christ, involves in it all his glory. All her members are naturally his enemies ; but he has purposed, from eternity, to make them not only his friends but his family. This is the end God had in view when he sent his Son into the world in our

nature. This is the reason why Christ suffered, died, rose again, and now intercedes for man at the throne of God.

Angels are the children of God by creation ; but we are his children in every sense in which we possibly can be. The Saviour is essentially the Son of God, and he became human. The Son of God became the Son of man, that the sons of men might be made the sons of God.

I. The first thing to be considered is this ENDEARING RELATIONSHIP, "*Our Father.*"

We are blessed with it in, and through Jesus Christ, by regeneration and adoption. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name : which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (John i. 11—13.) The sovereign pleasure of Jehovah, and nothing inferior to this, called them into a new state of existence ; and blessed them with a spirit of adoption, whereby they cry Abba, Father.

We are commanded here to address God as our Father, for this plain reason—that the relationship in all its glory is destined to pervade the whole of our worship for ever. There will be some glorious peculiarities involved in the wor-

ship of saints, that will not be involved in that of angels.

1. We are to address God as our Father, *to encourage us in the midst of all weakness and distress*. What child dreads the presence of a father of whose love he is well assured—of one to whom he is indebted for all? It is in intimacy with, and by the experience of, the affections of a father, that a child knows him *to be* his father. So it is in intimacy with, and by our experience of, the *love* of our heavenly Father, that we are taught to know him as such. The relationship to God as a Father, cannot be known by any one but in the relationship of a child: it must be known *in itself*; it cannot be known by any thing extraneous to itself. I may tell my hearers of the relationship subsisting between God and his family in his Son Jesus Christ; but they can never enter into its blessedness without being conscious that they are themselves the sons of God. Seek, then, the blessing: it is open to every one that hears the gospel. “Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.” (Ps. ciii. 13.) Let us not imagine that because Deity is infinitely too perfect to admit of the ebb and flow of feeling, (such I mean as we experience in our own bosoms,) that we are not to pay the utmost attention to this interesting truth. Sym-

pathy and love, properly speaking, inhabit in the highest degree the bosom of essential Deity ; while let it ever be remembered, that all correct feelings, wherever found, whether in the bosoms of men or angels, are only emanations from Deity—they are from the bosom of the Infinite and Eternal ; though, indeed, in comparison with their parental source, they are infinitely less than a particle of light to the body of the sun. All the exquisite feelings of sympathy and love that inhabited the bosom of the humanity of Jesus Christ, inhabit the bosom of Deity ; and to Deity they must be traced. All insensibility, all corrupt, all exclusively selfish feeling, must be traced to an opposite source. Finite beings have nothing in themselves but imperfection.

Be encouraged, then, to wait on God as a Father, and seek the simplicity of a child to receive his truth. Metaphysical science abused, is highly injurious to the best interests of man. Whatever difficulties may occur, let the truth I have been dwelling upon occupy the heart. I have proved that it must be so : if otherwise, no lovely feelings would ever inhabit any being. No excellence, of any kind, can exist in the creature, which does not come from God ; and none can come from God, which does not primarily inhabit himself. The glorious feelings of the Saviour's humanity are to be traced to this ; the divine perfection dwelling in his humanity.



2. We are commanded by the Saviour, in the second place, to address God as our Father, *to teach us filial reverence, as well as filial affection*. Love and reverence meet together, in the highest degree, in the worship of God in heaven ; and they must be blended in the worship of God on earth. A son must honour the father he loves. Wherever filial affection is found, it invariably involves reverence as well as love. “ God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him.” (Psalm lxxxix. 7.) God will be revered as well as loved ; indeed he cannot be loved without being revered.

3. We are commanded to address God as our Father, in the third place, *to teach us to persevere till we prevail*. It is a certain fact, that he has provided every good for his people ; and it is therefore true, that they must be invested with every good. Instead of opposing the purposes of God to our prayers, we ought to make a wise use of his purposes as an encouragement to prayer. He has purposed to give us every good ; and he has commanded us to pray for every good of which we stand in need. “ Delight thyself in the Lord ; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.” (Psalm xxxvii. 4.) It is not often that we err in our desires, when our hearts are right ; and we know perfectly well, the persevering affection and skill with which children ask



gifts of their parents : they know that they have the most tender string to touch, and that they *must* prevail. To encourage you to wait on God at a throne of grace, I need not, I trust, remind you of the tenderness and sympathy of our heavenly Father.

4. We are commanded to address God as our father, in the fourth place, *to remind us that we are one family*. The Saviour does not command his family to pray, "Father, which art in heaven ;" or individually "My Father ;" but "*Our* Father," to teach us,

(1.) *That he is himself included*. Their prayers ascend to God in him, and are answered by God through him. "Our Father" necessarily involves, in another point of view, the relationship of Christ as a brother, the head and representative of his family. "I ascend unto my Father and your Father, to my God and your God."

How is it that any can say they do not find Christ in this prayer ? It is full of him, from first to last ; as full as he himself could make it. He commands them to pray ; and he says, "My family, my brother, I will lead you by the hand into the presence of the God of heaven. Do not be afraid ; your elder brother is with you : say, with me, *Our* Father : I take the lead in every petition you present." Oh may we ever feel this ! It will be time enough for us to give over praying to God when we can ascertain that

Jesus Christ has ceased to intercede for us ; then, and not till then, ought we to cease to pray. But ‘difficulties and obstacles multiply themselves continually’—Multiply your prayers in exact proportion.

(2.) *That we ought to pray for each other.* Pray one for another. “The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” (James v. 16.) That individual who prays only for himself, has never prayed aright. The spirit of prayer is very comprehensive ; it is a spirit of love ; it pervades the bosoms of all the family of God, without a single exception. Mistake me not. I am aware that sometimes, in the midst of doubts and distresses, the believer may think he has no object in view but himself : nevertheless, principle may be strongly retained in his bosom, when he himself is incapable of perusing all its workings. A man may be so severely exercised for a season as not to think even of his wife, or his children ; but would any one infer from this, that an affectionate husband can ever be so placed as not to have the welfare of his wife and children at heart ? “Brethren, pray for us,” says the apostle ; and the saints of old frequently prayed for each other. Solomon prayed for the whole family of God ; and in so doing he was a type of Messiah, in his intercession.

(3.) *That we should pray likewise with each other.* God intended that his family should pray

both with, and for each other. They are his jewels: sun, moon, and stars, are trifles in his eyes compared with them; kings and empires are put aside as little things, when he in his providence sees fit to exalt his church, as exalt her he will, in spite of all the efforts of her enemies to the contrary. God himself, when seeking for his jewels, is like the woman mentioned in scripture, looking for her piece of lost silver: and be assured, my brethren, that he will never lose one of them. As, then, God is our Father, and Christ is our Brother, let us not despair; let us pray to him in the midst of all difficulties, national and individual. "O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together." (Ps. xxxiv. 3.)

(4.) *That we may learn to treat each other as brethren.* Each member of the church should be as fully interested in a brother's welfare as in his own. "Love thy neighbour as thyself." The perfection of the law requires this; and it is the glory of the gospel that it invests man with the perfection of the law. "*Our Father.*" The Saviour teaches us to love each other. It was intended that every principle of bitterness should be excluded; that we should all love as brethren; that offences should be mutually forgiven. A root of bitterness springing up in the human heart is fatal. Churches have been undermined; by what? By bitterness of spirit! Had drunk-

enness and scandal appeared, the evil would have been exposed and eradicated ; but this bitterness of spirit has sometimes been suffered to live, till it has destroyed churches, and scattered those who have been in the habit of worshipping God together as one family ; *so* scattered them that we must despair of ever seeing them united again, till God himself, their own Father, in all the tenderness of his love, shall collect them together around his throne in glory. Cherish no bitterness of spirit towards any one, whatever evils you may experience at his hands. You would do this, if truly wise, from a principle of self-love. “Sirs, ye are brethren,” said Moses to the two Hebrews as they strove together : “why do ye wrong one to another ?” (Acts vii. 26.) God would have his family love each other. If we loved one another as we ought to do, we should be indeed invincible.

II. “*Which art in heaven.*” I would consider, secondly, HIS FAMILY MANSION, AND OUR PATERNAL HOME.

Our Saviour, addressing himself to his disciples, says, “In my Father’s house are many mansions : if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself ; that where I am,

there ye may be also." (John xiv. 2, 3.) At home—in their Father's house, and with their elder Brother.

1. *In heaven, God manifests the glory of his love in a peculiar manner.* In heaven, and in heaven only, God dispenses *all* his blessings. We are, at present, incapable of receiving them all; but we are destined to receive them, when we arrive at our Father's house above. Children at school are not in the enjoyment of all the luxuries and delights of home: they must go to their father's residence, ere they have all they wish for; and, which is sweeter than all besides, the full enjoyment of their parent's love.

"Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool." (Isa. lxvi. 1.) By heaven is meant some place; where it may be I know not, and it is wise to check vain curiosity; but it is where God chooses to manifest all his love to all his family. It is of little importance whether it be near this earth, or millions of miles distant. If God pleased, he could transport me there in a second of time. Space is nothing to him who is omnipresent. "Behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain him." (1 Kings viii. 27.) If he willed it, I might be the next moment in the most distant regions of the earth. Whenever I bid adieu to this tabernacle of flesh, I shall be with him, and see him as he is. But though God is peculiarly

present in heaven, yet he is present every where. And we have the promise, that wherever two or three are gathered together in his name, our Father and our Brother are present in the midst of us, to hear, and to bless us.

2. We address our Father as *in heaven*, to teach us the infinite exaltation of God ; that he can do what he pleases in all the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth ; that God is infinitely exalted above all finite being, and beyond any idea that can ever enter into our minds. “ I know that the Lord is great, and that our Lord is above all gods. Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places.” (Ps. cxxxv. 5, 6.)

3. The Saviour teaches us to address the Father in this manner, *to remind us that we are only strangers and pilgrims here on earth* ; and, in consequence of this, that we should be perpetually engaged in preparing for heaven. When we are about to visit friends at a distance—friends, whom we love and respect,—it is our desire to appear with becoming decorum and affection ; in such a manner as that we may impart, as well as receive, pleasure. Need I remind you of the joy it will give to God himself to see his family with him ? Though he is an immutable being, it will give him exquisite pleasure to see his family safe in heaven. “ The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty ; he will save, he



will rejoice over thee with joy ; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing." (Zeph. iii. 17.) And of the Saviour it is said, "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied," (Isa. liii. 11 :) when the bodies as well as the souls of the redeemed shall be ushered into the presence of the Lord in glory. "Willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." (2 Cor. v. 8.) It is better to depart and to be with Christ, says the apostle ; to remind us that, in a very short time, we shall receive a rich welcome to our Father's courts above. We ought not, then, like naughty children, to play the truant as we are going home. No, we are pilgrims and strangers here on earth, seeking better things.

When Abraham set out on his journey, at the command of God, to offer up his son Isaac, he knew not whither he was going : but he was well aware that he was on his road to heaven, at the command, and under the guidance of God. In like manner, we should always live as those who are travelling to heaven.

Our walk and conversation would be widely different from what they are, if our minds were deeply impressed with this truth. Of the family of heaven, and journeying thither, we should declare plainly that we seek a country.

From what I have said, learn a few lessons :

and remember that we must all learn, again and again, the same lessons ; indeed, we should be ever learning, under the discipline of the Holy Spirit. God is truth ; and the Spirit of truth is given to guide his family here with his counsel, that they may afterwards be received into glory.

1. Learn then, first, *the love of God*.

It appears in his covenant ; in the gift of his Son ; in the sacrifice of Messiah ; in every gift to us : the same love pervades all things connected with religion. “ Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God ; therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.” “ Beloved, now are we the sons of God ; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be ; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.” (1 John iii. 1, 2.) No contrast is more striking than that which is seen in the family of God, first, in their natural, and afterwards in their spiritual state, when ushered into the presence of God to receive all the blessings he has prepared for them.

2. Learn, secondly, *to honour your heavenly Father in all things*. Ask yourselves, continually, ‘ Is my Father pleased with me ? ’ An ingenuous child will do so to an earthly father : surely we should so honour our *heavenly* Father ; and not only honour him ourselves, but be the means of leading others to honour him also.



“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” (Matt. v. 16.)

The church of God is destined to be the Bible of the ungodly. This is a book which they must read; though, perhaps, they will not read the volume of inspiration, they must read the pages of the human heart, when the loveliness of true religion appears in the conduct of the children of God. The children of this world are obliged to admire them, even while they affect to laugh at them, and call them saints. There is a voice within, that plainly whispers ‘they are better than you;’ and they cannot help saying in their hearts, ‘O that we were like them!’ But sin is precious to them, and they have not resolution enough to forsake it.

Some persons talk as if a decree from God were necessary to send sinners to everlasting punishment. A decree from God! This would be a work of supererogation indeed. O no; it is not necessary to send sinners to hell; there they go, and will go of themselves. Man does that work effectually. There is mischief enough in the human heart to tempt Satan himself: yes, and the devil has, again and again, been tempted by man to tempt him.

3. Learn, moreover, *to submit to all the paternal chastisements of God.*—“We have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we

gave them reverence : shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live ? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure ; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.” (Heb. xii. 9, 10.) Submit to his chastisements ; they are, perhaps, the strongest proof of his love.

4. *Learn to be like him.*—This should be the ambition of all saints. Be engaged with principle. Ask yourselves ; what would God have the heart to be ? I profess to be the temple of the living God ; what ought my thoughts and affections to be ? And remember that he has not only given the command “ Be ye perfect,” but has promised that perfection as a blessing. “ The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me.” (Ps. cxxxviii. 8.) “ Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children ;” (Eph. v. 1 ;) by which the apostle means, be ye like God. All the perfections of Deity are engaged in the work ; it will, and must be accomplished. “ Predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son.” (Rom. viii. 29.) The predestination of God involves nothing but good ; and this is another reason why we should seek every good at his hands.

5. *Learn to abide by his instructions in all things.* We are not, as a professing people, to suffer the examples, the evil, or even the good examples, of others to be our rule. Our rule is to be what God says : and there is this pecu-

liarity in his commands—they have all the sanctions of infinity and eternity.

We cannot but love and respect the image of the living God, wherever found. Would we trace it in all its glory, we must go to Jesus, “who suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps.” (1 Pet. ii. 21.) He presents his Father with an atonement, and us with an example. He has promised to give us his Holy Spirit, and to save us from every enemy: then, and not till then, will salvation be perfect.

6. Lastly, learn *to trust God at all times, in all places, and under all circumstances.*—Trust him for all good, without one single exception. He has nothing but good to communicate to his family. True, some of his dispensations may be painful to our feelings; yet, what is painful to the feelings, is often salutary to the frame. A medicine prescribed by a physician may be very nauseous, but it may be the means of saving life. Thus it is with all the medicine presented to us by our heavenly Physician. His own life and health are in them! Look to him for temporal blessings, and have wisdom enough to let him choose for you. But above all things seek spiritual blessings, and seek them daily. We have the promise of the Lord that “he will give grace and glory; and that no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.” (Ps. lxxxiv. 11.)

*Trust God for comfort and consolation when every thing earthly fails.* The children of God are sometimes placed in circumstances exquisitely painful; and then they stand in need of God's peculiar care, and much of the energy of the Divine Spirit, to keep them from sinking. Now it is recorded in scripture, "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up." (Ps. xxvii. 10.) It is hard to be forsaken by father and mother; but God has promised to be the Father of the fatherless, and the Husband of the widow: "In Him the fatherless findeth mercy." (Hosea xiv. 3.)—I cannot help thinking of a countrywoman of mine, who was once reproved by her own child, whose father was dead: "Mother, why do you cry?"—"What shall I do, what shall I do? thy father is dead, I know not what to do." The child said, "Mother, I will tell you what to do; sing the praises of God." She felt the reproof; the truth reached her, not only from the lips of her son, but from her God. Yes, God is worthy to be praised in the midst of our troubles: they are the ministers of his glory, and of our good.

To conclude: *Remember this endearing relationship when your faith seems to be annihilated.*

The believer, when he beholds his sins marshalled against him in battle array, when his eye is turned exclusively to them, is ready to sink, not only into despondency, but into despair. Ever,

then, let the mercy of God be kept in view ; let the love that prompted him to send his Son to die for us, be dwelt upon ; and let distressed sinners think of God “ our Father ! ” of Christ our Brother ! You will then know, in every sense, how you ought to think of him ; and learn, as others have done, to triumph in him.

Some young believers have been tempted to pray that the Lord would visit them with afflictions. They have heard others speak of the exercises they have gone through ; of the dark and painful hours they have passed, when dwelling on the corruption of their own hearts ; and as they have not felt these, they have hastily concluded that they were not of the family of heaven : but God has eventually visited them, till they have been obliged to cry out, “ Spare me, O spare me, Lord ! ”

There are seasons of deep spiritual affliction, (compared with which all the afflictions of earth in the aggregate are but little,) when God seems to hide his face, and to chastise his child for his rebellion, throwing (if I may so speak) the sparks and flames of hell into his face. What bitter discipline is this ! Perhaps some of you may experience something of it at the present moment. Remember, you have a Father, a Brother above ! Remember, that others have been as severely afflicted as you are at the present time ; and they are now in glory, beyond the reach of all

affliction. “ Will the Lord cast off for ever ? and will he be favourable no more ? Is his mercy clean gone for ever ? Doth his promise fail for evermore ? Hath God forgotten to be gracious ? Hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies ? ” (Psal. lxxvii. 7—9.) Here is a soul deeply exercised ; but read the context, and you will find he persevered in waiting upon God, until he triumphed most completely.

## SERMON IV.

## ON THE LORD'S PRAYER.

MATT. vi. 9.

*Hallowed be thy name.*

I HAVE already observed on the interesting truth that the Saviour places himself at the head of this prayer : “ My God and your God ; my Father, and your Father.” “ My brethren,” and “ thy sons,” form the burden of his intercession before the throne of God in glory.

“ Our Father which art in heaven.” Compare this with other passages of scripture : “ Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.” (John xiv. 13.) This is the reason why he teaches his disciples to say, “ Our Father ;” they are to approach God, assured that the God they venerate will most readily confer every thing that is good upon his believing people. “ The Lord will give grace and glory : no good



thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." (Ps. lxxxiv. 11.)

I. What the name of God implies. I need hardly remind you, that the name of an individual implies the *person*, with all the assemblage of his good, mixed, or bad qualities. God in scripture addresses us as we address each other; and all the figures of speech which we use, every striking, every interesting association that can enter into any human composition—all are found in the Bible. The name of God, then, comprises himself, and all the glory of his perfections as the covenant God, Redeemer, and Saviour of mankind.

1. The name of God implies his *essence*. "Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his NAME: bring an offering, and come before him: worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness." (1 Chron. xvi. 29.) "O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his NAME together." (Psal. xxxiv. 3.)

2. The name of God implies his *perfections*; but in an especial manner, those perfections in which we are most eminently interested; those perfections which are usually denominated moral perfections,—his mercy, his wisdom, his truth, his faithfulness, his holiness, his justice, his love. "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and



truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation." (Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7.) Many passages might be quoted.

3. The name of God implies his *titles*. "And Moses said unto God, Behold when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you, and they shall say to me, What is his name, what shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you." (Exod. iii. 13, 14.)

4. The name of God sometimes in scripture implies that *revelation* which he has been pleased to give of himself, and of his will. Salvation must be filled and pervaded by God, or it can be no salvation to us. We converse with each other, now and then, as if grace were something distinct from God; but there is no spiritual gift, there is no spiritual blessing, that is, or can be separated from himself. He is the life of the soul, and for that reason the life of every grace that inhabits the bosom of his believing children. "Let them that love thy name be joyful in thee." (Ps. v. 11.) "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John viii. 32.) The truth

as it is in Jesus, and that truth inspired by God himself, is absolutely necessary to save us from ourselves ; and, in that salvation, from every other enemy.

5. The name of God is used in scripture, to imply the *service of God*. Thus it was the intention of David to build a house for the name of the Lord, that is, for the service of the Lord ; but God told him that he had been a man of war, and had shed blood, and therefore he was not destined to build it : (1 Kings v. 5 ; 1 Chron. xxviii. 3 :) but Solomon was to build the house, because God is a God of peace in his Son, of whom Solomon was a type. Yet, at the same time, God gave credit to David for the excellence of his purpose. Yes ; he marks every thing that is pleasing to him, within the inmost recesses of the human bosom. A thought, a wish, or even a sigh, in unison with his will, can never pass unregarded.

6. By the name of God is sometimes implied in scripture, *the covenant and purpose of his mercy*. This is the reason why the Saviour himself, in addressing his Father, says to him, “ I will declare thy name unto my brethren ; in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee ; ” (Ps. xxii. 22 ; Heb. ii. 12 ;) that in my name they may approach and worship thee in spirit and in truth.

*“Hallowed be thy name.”*—This is the first petition, and justly so ; for true religion can have no existence but where the name of God is hallowed. God is infinitely superior to every other being ; and must necessarily occupy the supreme place. It is an absolute impossibility that he should occupy the second. One striking proof of spiritual integrity is this ; that the individual is disposed to give to God the honour due unto his name : to exalt him perpetually above every thing. Have you and I learned this lesson ? Forgive me for confessing with shame and confusion, in the pulpit this evening, that, though I am striving hard to learn it day after day, yet I am making very poor progress. I am only just beginning to learn it ; and if I had not infinite wisdom, as well as infinite love, to teach me, I should learn nothing.

It is when man comes into contact with the perfections of God in his covenant, and the work of his Son and Spirit, that all the rebellion of the heart evinces itself. It is not in the midst of the gross sins of which he has been guilty, that this rebellion is so apparent, as in his opposing God in all the glory of his salvation.

Perhaps some of you may have known what it is to feel pride within your bosoms, swelling itself into gigantic dimensions, in resisting with all its might a God of mercy ; when he is bringing home to you a sense of your absolute dependence,

and explaining to you the workings of your own mind. In reality, quarrelling with God, because you are not individually gods. Oh ! it is a hard lesson to read the human heart. Could I live without the workings of corruption, could I live and be free from sin, I would willingly be a galley-slave all the days of my life.

There are two reasons why this petition occupies the first place ; why the name of God is first introduced.

1. God has his own glory primarily in view : this is absolutely necessary ; the welfare of the creature could not be secured without it. " The Lord hath made all things for himself," (Prov. xvi. 4.) When his glory occupies the first place, then all that we can possibly want or desire follows in train. God begins ; and not only so, he carries on his own work (the work of grace) in the human heart, for his own name's sake. This is the reason why he is not wearied with us : but for this, we should have provoked him to leave us long ago. This is the reason he himself assigns, again and again, for not having destroyed his once chosen people ; " For my name's sake." This is the reason why God ought to be perpetually in our view. And nothing less than this can fully satisfy the mind of him who is illumined by the Spirit of the living God. When that highly privileged individual knows this important truth, he sees things in the light in which

God himself sees them, and comes to the same conclusion with him, (if I may be allowed to use such terms in speaking of the Most High,) who knows every thing without the most elaborate process of reasoning, which must, in most cases, take place in our own bosoms. God is first in his own view, and should be first in ours. In perusing the history of saints in scripture, we find that God is the first object with them; they looked up to him; they were taught to hallow his holy name; and in doing so they invariably found their own welfare.

2. God is very jealous of his own glory, and we should be so likewise. He must, and will be first. Nothing worse can be said of the devil than this, that he wished to give to God the second place. In this is comprised all evil of every kind and degree, from the time of the fall to the present day; and from the present moment, for ever: and all those who are not taught by the Spirit of God, to keep his glory primarily and perpetually in view, must one day or other rue the awful consequences; according to the word of the Lord in Malachi, "If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name, saith the Lord of hosts; I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings: yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to heart." (Mal. ii. 2.)

Read with accuracy the workings of your own

minds, and you will find that you are opposed to nothing more than this. And here we find sin and rebellion against the Most High, in a degree in which it cannot be exhibited by Satan himself. He is opposed only to a God of holiness and justice ; but we know what it is to rebel against a God of *mercy*. O that we knew ourselves ! While I am addressing you, I am sensible that there is a principle within my own bosom opposing itself to the majesty of God, in all the loveliness of his covenant offices. And what is the consequence of this ? I am taught to prize the covenant office of the Holy Spirit, as fully as the covenant office of Christ. One is altogether as necessary as the other : for, were it possible, after millions of ages spent in perfect and spotless obedience, for the Holy Spirit to withhold his sovereign grace, we should perish evermore. We have only to read ourselves accurately and profoundly, to be of one mind with respect to all the essentials of religion. If we differ, we shall differ only with respect to things of very inferior consequence. But it is delightful to think of that blissful period when we shall meet before the throne of God, seeing “ eye to eye ;” the intellects of all being equally illumined, and the hearts of all wholly engaged with the perfections of God ; without even the shadow of a shade of difference—and that throughout eternity.



II. HOW IS HIS NAME TO BE HALLOWED? I shall endeavour to answer this question.

Let it be remembered, that the holiness of God admits of no increase—of no diminution. No one can add to his perfections in the least degree; it is an infinite impossibility. Even the work of Jesus Christ himself, in one important sense, did not enrich them. The obedience of his own Son did not make his name more glorious; it only served to evince his essential glory. Nothing can be added to his perfections, even by the work of a divine person; much less by any thing that we can say or do. But let it be ever remembered, that Christ, as a divine person, purchased every blessing for us, and that his work involved in it the brightest developement of the glory of the divine perfections; and at the same time the highest good that can be imparted to finite beings.

To hallow or sanctify the name of God implies this—to keep his holiness perpetually in view. Divines tell us, and very justly, that power is the life, and holiness the beauty of Deity. Every moral agent who is truly wise keeps the holiness of God primarily in view; and continually remembers the injunction, “Be ye holy, for I am holy.” (1 Pet. i. 16.) It is in his moral, not in his natural perfections, that we are destined to imitate God for ever. In his natural perfections we cannot do it. Creative power,

for example, is incommunicable. We cannot call into existence a particle of dust, nor can we preserve it when created : but the moral perfections of God are communicated to us by the Holy Spirit ; and the same Spirit is engaged to bring them to perfection eventually within the bosoms of finite beings like ourselves.

There is a peculiarity in the manner in which the Saviour expresses himself in this petition ; he expresses himself not only in the most rich and comprehensive, but in the most accurate manner. He does not say, *glorify* my Father's name ; though if he had said so, we should have known what he meant by it. All creation glorifies God. Every thing that he has called into existence has a tongue which glorifies its Creator and Preserver. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handy-work." (Ps. xix. 1.) But it would be improper to say that the firmament sanctifies God ; that the sun, moon, and stars, sanctify God : though they glorify, they cannot possibly sanctify him. None but moral agents who wear his image can sanctify him. None can reflect the moral image of God, but his own moral creatures engaged in his service ; engaged in his worship in heaven above, or in the earth beneath. It is the peculiar, I will not say privilege, but *prerogative*, of his own family, to hallow or sanctify his holy name ; to reflect the beauty of his holiness ; and



to exhibit to his enemies what the perfections of God are, as revealed in the Scriptures.

The volumes of creation and providence were open to men for many ages, but they learned very little. Some tell us a great deal of natural religion; volumes have been written upon the subject; but to what purpose? Man cannot possibly learn true religion from any thing but a revelation from God. Nothing can bind the conscience, but a revelation from God. If a revelation from God had not reached man, I should boldly declare that the sun, moon, and stars did not oblige me to worship God. I could not have ascended from the creature to the Creator: I have no capacity for it. I should not have known whether there had been one God, or ten thousand. No, it is a command from God himself that imposes the obligation; and when God presents us with a revelation, then every thing we see increases the obligation. What is called "natural religion," is one of the strong-holds of infidelity; and it is to be lamented that so many great and good men have dwelt much upon it, when in reality it is a non-entity. But it may be said, does not St. Paul tell us that God himself may be perused in his works? Most assuredly; but in consequence of having previously received a revelation from him. And it ought to be remembered, moreover, that the apostle was writing to those who had

received a revelation, though they had blended with it the follies and absurdities of men. This revelation has travelled into the remotest nations of the earth, or men would have had no idea of the perfections of God. Before man can ascend from the creature to the Creator, he must be able to comprehend the link which unites them together : and this his finite capacity cannot accomplish by the feeble light of nature, unassisted by revelation.

The apostle presents us with what is singularly striking and instructive when he says, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth ; to the Jew, first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith ; as it is written, The just shall live by faith." (Rom. i. 16, 17.) I repeat it again, that revelation alone binds man, and binds the command of God upon him. Wherever it is found, it is equally binding, whether in the law or the gospel ; for the authority of God must live in all his dispensations.

III. I will now lay down THE SCRIPTURAL RULE FOR HALLOWING THE NAME OF GOD.

First, then, hallowing or sanctifying the name of God, involves the utmost *reverence* in the worship of God. "This is it that the Lord spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that

come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified." (Lev. x. 3.)

To begin with principle : "Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts." (1 Pet. iii. 15.) We know, perfectly well, what the feelings of an obedient son are when he meditates on the character and benevolence of an affectionate father : we know what he feels towards his father ; and can easily conceive the indignation that would take possession of his bosom, if he heard his parent's name traduced. May we revere the name of God in our hearts, and never presume to engage in his worship, either in public or in private, without silently invoking the aid of his Holy Spirit ! I need not tell you, that when the heart is right, every thing else will be right. We stand in need of having our principles corrected perpetually ; and, blessed be God, the spring of action is *in himself*, and he has covenanted to carry on the work to perfection. Let the name of God, then, be revered in the heart, in the closet, in the family, and in the public assembly of his saints. We have more reason to reverence the name of God, than the angels in heaven have. Do you ask why ? I answer, we are under much deeper obligations than they are. We have beheld the divine perfections unfolding themselves in all their glory in our nature ; and in that nature following us into the depths of hell,

beneath the feet of all the enemies of God, to raise us to the zenith of glory.

Secondly, The name of God is hallowed by *fruitfulness* in every good word and work. When you see an individual who is desirous of promoting the glory of God by doing all the good he can to his fellow-creatures, oh! prize him as a treasure invaluable in this corrupt world. We want *individual fruitfulness* in the day in which we live. "Ye are the salt of the earth." (Matt. v. 13.) Remember this, ye professors of religion, and let those who are determined to go to hell, see in you what they ought to see. "Herein is my Father glorified," says the Saviour, "that ye bear much fruit." (John xv. 8.) You can be conscious of being his disciples, only while loving, serving, and delighting in him. Angels must look down with delight on the individual who is engaged in the service of God; they know what difficulties, internal and external, he has to struggle with; and the lovely development of the principle of obedience, in the midst of so much opposition, must be peculiarly delightful to them. If you saw a flame weak as that of a candle, in the midst of the ocean, it would surprise you to behold that flame gradually gathering strength, till it overspread and drank up the whole. But we have to witness a still greater wonder, and that within our own

bosoms. Grace is at first very small, and very weak ; but it is destined eventually to overspread and consume all our unhallowed lusts and passions. Let us look for the miracle within—a miracle greater than any we can read of—the miracle which changes the worst into the best of mankind.

Thirdly, The name of God is to be hallowed by *faithfulness* to him in every thing. “ If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God ; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth ; that God in all things may be glorified, through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever.” (1 Pet. iv. 11.) He who wishes to sanctify the name of God, must consider that all he has to do, temporal as well as spiritual, is to be done to the glory of God. This should be the commencement and the termination of every thing.

Some persons seem to have an idea of separating business and religion : but, no ; they ought to be involved in each other. It is a mercy and a blessing to be engaged in business ; and business was intended by God to be subservient to the purposes of true religion. I would appeal to some individuals whom God has blessed with much of the wealth of this world, and who are not obliged to labour as others are, to earn their daily bread : tell me, to how many temptations are you not exposed from frequent hours of leisure ? Doubtless Satan takes advantage of

these, and of all peculiar seasons, to ply the mind with his wily snares. Man was intended to be active in body, and in soul : even in Eden, Adam was commanded to cultivate the ground. God has evidently intended to fill business with himself, to make it a blessing, and not an interruption ; and man is never truly happy till he has learned this lesson, “ Whether, therefore, ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.” (1 Cor. x. 31.) Why am I commanded to support this frail frame ? For the glory of God, that I may serve God with my body and spirit, which are his. “ Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.” (Rom. xii. 11.)

Many of you are engaged in business : what do your consciences say to these things ? I do conjure you, when you retire to your homes, to fall on your knees, entreating the Lord to fill you with his fulness, that by his blessing, religion may form with you one glorious whole, embracing you altogether—yourselves, your wives, your families, and all your concerns.

But is this the case in London, generally speaking ? Alas ! no : God is little thought of by people in business, and their conduct proves it. I ask you, is God in your consciences, behind your counters, and in your counting-houses ? O do not sacrifice the wealth of heaven, the favour of God, and peace of conscience, for worldly gain. Forbid it, Lord !



To hallow the name of God, then, is to carry God himself with us, and in us, into every thing we do. That "God in all things may be glorified, through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever." (1 Pet. iv. 11.)

Lastly, the name of God is to be hallowed by a ceaseless *life of faith*. We are assured that it shall be well with the righteous. They have their troubles and difficulties, but God is with them; and he is engaged to lead them triumphantly out of them all. "Them that honour me, I will honour." (1 Sam. ii. 30.)

The blissful period to which we are looking forward, involves all that I have been speaking of. We all believe that Messiah is to reign gloriously; and that all error in principle, and vice in practice, will be trampled into *nothing* beneath the feet of the Lord of hosts. I firmly believe that we are living in the dawn of that sacred day. I may differ from some of my brethren, as to whether the Saviour is to reign on earth; but we all agree that a principle of holiness is to reign in the human heart—that Jesus is to be enthroned in the human bosom; we all agree that people are to love and serve the Lord more generally, and with a great deal more cheerfulness, in that blessed period, than they do now. But let it be remembered, that for all supplies of grace we are invited to the throne of God at the present moment: let it be remembered, that,

if we are straitened, we are straitened only in ourselves. Let us lay siege to the throne of grace ; and never be silent, till we are conscious that God is with us, and in us, of a truth.

To conclude : Let us learn, in the first place, that holiness ought to be the ambition and the pursuit of every reasonable being, and that perpetually. Impurity is an insult to reason, to the head as well as to the heart. It is impossible to do justice to the human intellect, or to the human heart, without holiness. Until the image of God takes possession of both, neither the human intellect, nor the human heart, can reach its destiny. Nothing can fill the human heart but the living God. The image of God must ever live in union and communion with its parent ; and the covenant of eternity was entered into with this view. We were “predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son.” The predestination of God will prompt us, if we are truly wise, to be diligent in the use of all the means of grace. The strongest encouragement a believer can have to seek for holiness, is to know, that God has predestined to make his family holy. There is no predestination to evil, except the transgressor’s own ; the predestination of God has nothing to do with it. Predestination to evil is to be found only in the covenant of sin and Satan, not in the covenant of God : the covenant of God predestined the destruction of evil, and this is its glory.



2. Learn, again, that lukewarmness in religion is highly criminal in the sight of God. I am afraid that in the days in which we live we are too much like the Laodiceans of old. Remember, —I am now quoting the words of God,—of them he says, “So, then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.” (Rev. iii. 16.) We do not like to see individuals lukewarm in an earthly service ; it is a disgrace to be so, and may prove ruinous. We do not like to see a man trifling with his business, but cheerfully and fully engaged in it. How much more, then, when we are occupied with the service of the King of kings, who has done all for us ; on whom we depend for every thing ! And when we consider the life of our Saviour here on earth ; how ceaselessly he was employed, in serving God and man, without one single moment of intermission, from the womb till he cried out on the cross “It is finished ;” it surely must spur our minds to the most active energy in his cause. Do not be surprised at what I am about to tell you, but receive the truth into the inmost recesses of your hearts : he was as fully engaged in serving *man* as in serving God. All he did, comprised in it *as fully* the interest of his church, as it did the glory of God. Has the Saviour, then, been so ceaselessly occupied, and in this respect left me so eminent an example ; has the Lord of life and glory stooped even to hell for my sake ; and

shall I be lukewarm in his cause? Forbid it, Heaven! Forbid it, O thou infinitely gracious Jehovah!

Lastly. Learn to treat, even in conversation, the name of God with the utmost reverence. It is painful to hear in discourse, and to read in public papers, such expressions as "Gracious God!" "Good heavens!" &c. They know not what they do. Never trifle with the name of God. And you, my dear children, remember what I am telling you: do not take God's name in vain, for it is a very great sin: be not engaged in it yourselves, and put your hands to your ears when others do it. We should accustom ourselves, in all our thoughts and words, to treat the name of God with the utmost reverence. Some individuals introduce the name of God into a joke, to give it a zest: let nothing of this kind be once named among those who call themselves his disciples. Whenever we think of God, we should remember, that, though Jesus died that those who had taken his name in vain might be forgiven; yet that he died, too, that his holy name might be hallowed here on earth; and that for the same purpose his Holy Spirit might be given to reside in the hearts of his people.

*Amen.*

## SERMON V.

## ON THE LORD'S PRAYER.

MATT. vi. 10.

*Thy kingdom come.*

THIS follows the preceding petition with the utmost propriety. It is impossible for any individual to pray that the kingdom of God may come, without hallowing, or sanctifying, the name of God.

I. Let us consider, first, THE KINGDOM OF HIS PROVIDENCE.

We know, indeed, nothing of it but from *Revelation*: *there* we read its wonders. The idea of natural religion is a mere dream. Nothing, as I have insisted again and again, but a revelation from God can teach us; and nothing but a revelation from God can bind us. The volume of creation can impose no *obligation* upon us *of itself*.

When perused in the light of a revelation from God, it imposes an *additional* obligation ; but apart from it, it can impose none, because it can give us no definite rule. Ask all creation,—ask the sun, moon, and stars, “Can you tell us who made you?” All is silence! The ancient heathens had the volume of creation spread open before them, and what did they do? They invested the creature with the attributes of Deity; they worshipped gold and silver, wood and stone, and thus endeavoured to make matter eternal. So much for natural religion. Now read the beginning of the eleventh of Hebrews, and you will find that every thing is learned by faith. “By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God.” The kingdom of God’s providence becomes peculiarly interesting to us when viewed in the light of revelation. Look at Nebuchadnezzar. He was a wonderful man, and we see in him, as conspicuously as in any that ever lived, the striking effect of the grace of God. But he was first humbled in the dust of the earth, to the very condition of a brute. What does he say? “At the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: and all the inhabitants of the earth

are reputed as nothing ; and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth ; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, "What doest thou?" (Dan. iv. 34, 35.) What a striking contrast does Nebuchadnezzar here exhibit to what he was before ! Once, God was not in all his thoughts ; now, God seems to fill his soul with love and gratitude ; while he presents us with the perfections of Jehovah as fully and faithfully as any of the inspired penmen of the Old Testament.

The providence of God is to us peculiarly interesting, because we are involved in it every moment. Some individuals, of learning and science, have indeed presumed to deny a *particular* providence, while they admit a *general superintending* providence. This is the very essence of folly ; and atheism itself is more consistent. To admit a general, and to deny a particular providence, is a contradiction in terms. The mischief has arisen, in a great measure, from the hastiness with which professors of religion have attempted, now and then, to interpret the particular providence of God. But his providence does not fail, because they err in the interpretation of it. A particular providence preserves every atom—every particle of dust that flies before us. Science will prove this in the clearest manner. It is not in the power of created being to destroy a single particle

of matter. Fire, the most powerful natural agent with which we are acquainted, cannot effect this : it can only decompose, and form new combinations. Connected with the indestructibility of matter, mark another fact—viz. the tendency of matter to return to its original nothingness, and the proof of a particular providence will be found most complete. The power which called matter into existence, still preserves it. The reason why no particle of matter can be destroyed is, that the energy of the Divine Being pervades it continually. It may travel from east to west, and from the equator to the poles ; but it travels on the wings, and is preserved by the power of Jehovah, beyond the reach of destruction. My brethren, the very hairs of your head are all numbered ; and what an interesting truth does this present us with : if a fact so apparently trifling and insignificant be recognised by God, how much more every thing which has the slightest bearing on your welfare. This declaration of our Lord, that the hairs of your head are all numbered, involves a scientific truth ; and I invite all my friends, who are of a philosophic turn of mind, to connect literature and science with religion, and devote them to it. We are not afraid of knowledge : it is the *abuse* of knowledge that we fear : the legitimate use of knowledge will be a blessing, and was intended to be a blessing, to

man. And the legitimate use of knowledge is to subserve the purposes of true religion, and to lead us to find

“ —books in the running streams,  
Sermons in stones, and good in every thing.”

From the kingdom of God's providence learn four valuable lessons.

1. To fear God, who rules and overrules all things continually. “Who would not fear thee, O King of nations !” (Jer. x. 7.) God intended that we should peruse his providence with accuracy, in the light of his revelation : yes, even with his own eye ; and at the same time sing his praises with his own heart.

2. To rejoice in God in the midst of all trials and afflictions, and why ? because his providence rules over all. “The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice ; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof.” (Ps. xxvii. 1.) In the midst of all the sorrows and difficulties of life, learn perpetually to acknowledge from the inmost recesses of a broken spirit, that God still educes good from seeming evil.

3. To pray that the providence of God may be replete with blessings to his people. So he intended that it should be ; and so it has always been, as you will find abundantly proved in the history of mankind. Observe how the conquests of Alexander proved at last subservient to the spread of the gospel, for he carried with him the



Greek language into India—that language in which the Scriptures were afterwards so widely circulated, and the gospel so extensively preached. “Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.” (Isa. lxii. 6, 7.) This is to be your prayer and mine, to the day of death : we are to give him no rest ; he desires none. Here is our encouragement to prayer. We may sometimes, by our importunity, weary an earthly friend, till he banish us from his presence ; but, we thank God that he cannot be wearied. He, and he only, is *pleased* with ceaseless importunity. Let this, then, be our prayer continually.

4. That the providence of God is the handmaid of his grace ; preserving his people from a thousand evils, of which they know nothing at the present moment. Thus, they are said to be “preserved in Jesus Christ, and called.” (Jude 1.) The child, or which is more literally true, one whom he intends to make a child, is preserved in the arms of a God of mercy, to be called in his own time. The best commentary on this will be found in our own individual history, from childhood to the present time ; for he has read himself to little purpose who does not trace the hand of God in every thing ; and see how he has been conducted, by methods apparently the most unlikely, to the arms of a covenant God. O, we



shall find wonders in ourselves, for which to praise God through the countless ages of eternity !

II. But I humbly presume that the KINGDOM OF HIS GRACE is chiefly meant, and the Saviour himself expresses this, when he says, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matt. iv. 17.) He was about to establish his kingdom in the hearts of men : and, wherever God has an obedient subject, *there* is his kingdom. In the bosom of every individual whose heart is right with God, *there* is the monarchy of Jehovah : *there* he erects a throne. This is universally true—true of all the angels of God, when first created—true of our first parents ; when they were created, God's kingdom was in their hearts. But this is most eminently true with respect to the humanity of Jesus Christ himself. He is, as I have before stated, the first of subjects, as well as the first of kings. Would we see the perfections of God shining in all their glory, unfolding themselves in all their excellency ? We shall find them in the humanity of the Son of God. While on earth, he was perfectly subject to his Father. His obedience was unsullied by the least particle of evil. We see the perfections of God more fully developed in the person and work of Messiah, than if we could descend into hell, to peruse the torments of the damned ; more fully than if we could ascend to heaven,

to peruse the pure and spotless worship of saints and angels.

In the person of Messiah, we find true obedience bursting upon us in all the effulgence of Deity ; and, in that obedience, we find all the glories of his justice, as well as all the glories of his sovereignty. We find the full subjection of a finite being, (as well as the absolute dominion of an infinite being,) only in the humanity of the Son of God : and this carried on progressively to a state of perfection. It is true, that, as God, he was perfect ; but it is equally true, that the powers of his mind, and the graces of his heart, admitted of wonderful degrees of perfection. It is said of him, that “he increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.” And again we are told, that “it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.” “Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered. And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.” (Heb. ii. 10.—v. 8, 9.)

The kingdom of grace, then, in the human heart, resembles the kingdom which lives eternally in the humanity of the Son of God : and the Holy Spirit, in bringing all the family of God to perfection, has his eye fixed perpetually on

Jesus Christ. Generally speaking, the model of an artist is far inferior to that which is to be produced ; but here the model is infinitely the more perfect—here we see a perfect model of the kingdom of God. In the light of this truth we understand the Saviour, when he says, “ My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews : but now is my kingdom not from hence.” (John xviii. 36.)

The kingdom that reigned in his heart was wholly spiritual ; and so is the kingdom that is to live for ever in the hearts of his family. The kingdom of God, then, means the reign of his grace within the human heart. “ The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.” (Rom. xiv. 17.) “ The kingdom of God is within you.” (Luke xvii. 21.) We are said to be “ temples of God ;” and why the temples of God ? Because God himself is to be worshipped by us in the inmost recesses of our own bosoms, which thus become the temples of the living God. In other words, the kingdom of God means the influence of that purity in the human heart which reigns in the bosom of Jesus Christ himself at the present moment.

III. The kingdom of God evidently implies,

likewise, the KINGDOM OF HIS GLORY, where the Saviour is now at the right hand of God. But to this kingdom his people are to be brought by death; for “this, I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God: neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.” (1 Cor. xv. 50.)

In the kingdom of God’s glory, his people will have a body perfect, like the Saviour’s; and a soul perfect, like the Saviour’s; a body and a soul perpetually obedient to all the motions of the Divine Spirit, and subservient to the worship of God above; for they will be like the Saviour. The kingdom of grace is introductory to the kingdom of glory; and where the kingdom of grace is not established in time, the kingdom of glory cannot be established in eternity. It is a truth, sealed by the testimony, and even the oath, of God himself, that the wicked shall not enter into his kingdom. None but the clean shall enter there; none but the holy shall approach his presence; every thing that defileth shall be banished from him for ever. O my brethren, would you be the subjects of glory hereafter, you must be the subjects of grace here. It is a fatally delusive dream, to imagine that men may live as they please, and then at last, by receiving the sacrament, or reading a few prayers, previous to dissolution, be admitted to heaven. No: their sins will drive them to hell! This is the awful pros-

pect before those who wilfully neglect to return to God, while he is waiting to be gracious, and inviting to himself every one of the sons and daughters of Adam, who are privileged to hear his holy gospel. " *Now* is the accepted time, *now* is the day of salvation." O thoughtless sinner, hear his voice ; come to the Saviour ; enter into the kingdom of his grace ; and you will infallibly be ushered by himself into the kingdom of his glory.

IV. I would now consider, in the fourth place, the prayer, "*Thy kingdom come,*" and endeavour to show what it involves.

1. It involves the prosperity of the church of God, Jew and Gentile ; or rather the church without any distinction whatever ; for there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free ; but all are one in Christ Jesus : (Gal. iii. 28 :) one flock, under one shepherd, in one fold : all subjects of one government, all participators in the same privileges, and all heirs of the same glory. The ancient prophets looked forward to the Gentile church, and connected its prosperity with that of the Jewish. They loved God and the souls of men, and it gave them exquisite pleasure to see, through the vista of futurity, the kingdom of God established in all the earth. " For Zion's sake, will I not hold my peace, and

for Jerusalem's sake, I will not rest ; until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth." (Isa. lxii. 1.) Connect this with the passage I quoted before, and you will find it a privilege to convert the promises of God into prayers. It was for this end that all the promises of God were given ; and it is God's delight that we should upon our knees remind him of them. (2 Peter i. 4.)

2. In using this petition, we pray that God would be pleased to bruise Satan, and all his emissaries, under the feet of his church. He has himself promised to trample upon them ; and not only so, but that all his family shall trample the necks of his enemies under their feet also : for it is written, " The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." (Rom. xvi. 20.)

3. We pray that God would send forth faithful ministers to dispense his truth ; men who are at once lions and lambs ; ministers possessed of courage to preach the whole truth of God. Perhaps it is as necessary for us at this day in Britain as it ever was. It is the truth of God alone that is to preserve us from spiritual slavery ; and slaves we shall certainly be, unless God himself establish his throne in the midst of us.

Parents, guardians, teachers of youth, I charge you before God to instil the most profound hatred of *popery* into the hearts of those you



have to teach. Not a hatred to *papists*—by no means : the love of papists, but hatred of their errors. And may we be encouraged to pray continually that God would send faithful ministers amongst us ; that he would give us religious bishops, men after his own heart, full of faith and of the Holy Ghost ; that he would give us religious deans, and dignitaries, and ministers of every degree, who love the souls of men better than all earthly preferment ; ministers, who will seek the souls of men as their reward, and lose sight of all other considerations.

May these things live *ardently* in our prayers, and fly continually from our bosoms to the throne of God. It is impossible to be neutral : we must be for God, or against him, for Christ, or against him. “ He that is not with me, is against me,” (Matt. xii. 30,) says our Saviour : there is no neutral ground here.

4. We pray for the success of his gospel, and for a blessing on the means of grace, public and private. God appoints his own means to effect his own purposes : and the purposes of God, as I have often told you, ought to afford the strongest encouragement to prayer. God has purposed to hear and to answer prayer : “ Thus saith the Lord God, I will yet for this be inquired of.” (Ezek. xxxvi. 37.) We see, indeed, a great deal of evil in this country at the present moment ; wickedness meets us with a bold front at every



corner ; but yet we must acknowledge, to the praise of the glory of God, that there is a great deal of good. May this good be abundantly multiplied ! Do not let us say, We can do nothing to promote it. We can all do something, however little. Suppose every drop of water in the ocean were to say, I am but a drop ; the ocean needs not me ; my absence will not be felt ; I will ascend in vapour ; I will rise to the sun, or to the moon ; I will seek another abode : the ocean would soon be dry ! Remember, that as the ocean is composed of drops of water, so the mightiest works of man, from the earliest period to the present time, have been necessarily the result of a great number of small exertions bearing together upon one point. “God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love.” The sigh that ascends from a broken and contrite heart, will be remembered by him in the resurrection of the just. If some of you can do nothing more for the welfare of Christ’s kingdom, you can at least pray for it : pray, then ; pray, I beseech you ; and be assured that you will do more by your prayers, than could be accomplished by all the riches of the world without them.

Lastly, we pray that God may keep us, and all his family, by his own power, through faith, unto salvation. A religion that would be effective in doing any thing for God, must, first of all, fully embrace self. A man must have self-love, he

must be eminently interested in his own well-being, before he can be truly generous to others. When we enter the inmost recesses of our own bosoms, and discover the many monsters that inhabit that dreary abode ; when we learn what we are, and what we deserve at the hands of God ; and what God has done for us, and what he is doing, and what he will do within us by the agency of the Holy Spirit—(and these are things with which we should be perseveringly and perpetually engaged)—we shall then be under the influence of such a disposition that we cannot live at home ; we shall feel ourselves so rich, that we must dispense to others ; we shall feel so much for the welfare of our fellow-creatures, that we cannot let them rush on to destruction unmolested ; we shall break up the highway that leads to perdition, and hurl the fragments at their guilty souls, if peradventure the Lord may have mercy upon them, and turn them out of the path. This will be the work of every individual who feels the value of true religion. Some, by their conduct, seem to imagine that religion is selfish, and personal, in such a sense as to be regardless of all besides. By no means. That is not the religion of Jesus ; it does not deserve the name ; true religion gives man the wings of angels, to fly to some object or other in which he can delight, and gratify himself fully, in serving his Father and his God !

From what I have said, learn the five following lessons.

1. That it is awful hypocrisy to pray from sabbath to sabbath, "Thy kingdom come," while we are living in sin. Are there any of this description here? It is my province, as a minister of the gospel, to find out sinners of every description; to show them to themselves; to tell them of the evil of their state, and of their imminent peril. O how much formal and hypocritical prayer have we in this country at the present time! My brethren, is it reasonable to suppose that the Saviour taught us this admirable, this unrivalled prayer, that we might repeat it with our lips, and straightway forget both it and him? Such prayers, if prayers they may be called, do not ascend to heaven; but rather descend to hell, and drag the thoughtless individual after them. Do not fall into a mistake, and imagine, from what I am now telling you, that it is not the duty of all to pray; most assuredly it is; but it is also the duty of all to break off their sins by repentance, at the same time. *Both* are their duty; and, indeed, we never find the one to thrive and flourish without the other. It should be considered as the duty and privilege of all, to do whatever they can, to promote the prosperity of the kingdom of God.

2. In my humble opinion, it is more honourable to serve God in flesh and blood here below, in

the midst of all the imperfections of humanity, than to serve him as saints and angels do in heaven. O do not think little of a life of faith, while you can do any thing for God. When God would honour, that he might glorify the Son for ever, he sent him down *to earth* to be a *servant of men*. This was the language of God from eternity: 'I will glorify my Son.' Blessed God! what is thy purpose—how dost thou intend to glorify thy Son? 'I will glorify him, first of all, by making him a servant of men.' And he was as much a servant of men, as he was a servant of God.

There is no higher honour than to be engaged in the service of God. It is said, that at Kidderminster, where the great Baxter lived, the effects of that man's zeal live to the present day. We do not know what we can do; but we should enter upon the work of the Lord, looking up to him for his blessing. Yes, my brethren, in the midst of a deep sense of your own unworthiness, which leads you to exclaim, 'Who am I? what a sinful wretch am I!' Let me tell you, this spirit is absolutely necessary to carry you through, and in the strength of God to ensure you success.

3. Learn that, if *we* will not engage in the work of the Lord, he will not be at a loss for *other servants*. If we refuse the proffered honour, he will reserve it for others. O let me, then, conjure you to seize the glorious oppor-

tunity : whatever your talents may be, improve them to his glory.

4. It is certain that the kingdom of God will attain a glory, both here and hereafter. “ I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass ; I have purposed it, I will also do it.” (Isa. xlv. 11.) We do not work at hazard ; there is no peradventure we may not succeed : we shall undoubtedly succeed, though at the present moment we know not exactly how, or when. It is the privilege of the Lord’s children to work in the dark ; and an obedient child will not stay till he hears every ‘ why ’ answered. No ; affection prompts him to proceed ; and the language of his heart is, I shall know ‘ why ’ hereafter : it cannot rest a secret for ever ; and in the mean time I will work, to honour and obey my heavenly Father. God has promised that his church shall be a glorious church. True religion is destined to live in the east and in the west, in the north and in the south : the kingdoms of this world are to become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ. (Rev. xi. 15.)

5. The individual encouragement. While engaged in this glorious work, in fighting the battles of the Lord, remember the rich reward ; remember what the Saviour himself says to his own family : his words are peculiarly striking, and worthy of our most serious attention : “ To him that overcometh will I grant to sit down with

me in my throne ; even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." (Rev. iii. 21.) The humanity of Jesus Christ participates in the purity, the peace, the bliss, and the triumphs of Deity. *His destiny* is the destiny of all his followers, without one single exception. And lest any should shrink from receiving the blessings, and being diligently and delightfully engaged in his work, let it be remembered *whom* the Saviour is addressing : " Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing ; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." (Rev. iii. 17.) These are the individuals to whose view our Lord presents the blessings of *his own*, and his *Father's* kingdom ! Had they described themselves, amidst a full consciousness of their own unworthiness, they could not have given us a more faithful picture of wretchedness. Blessed be God for such a Saviour ; and that such servants are invited to receive at his hands a full, free, and everlasting salvation ; and are honoured by being engaged in his glorious work. May this blessing be ours, and all the glory shall be his, through the countless ages of eternity.

## SERMON VI.

## ON THE LORD'S PRAYER.

MATT. vi. 10.

*'Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.*

As perfection is the destiny of the believer, he is unjust to God and to himself, unless he keep it continually in view, and make it the constant object of his pursuit.

Perfection of every kind, and in the highest degree of which our natures are capable, is a blessing comprised in the covenant of the triune Jehovah. The object which Messiah kept perpetually in view was his own perfection; that his brethren might be made eternally perfect, in and by himself: for "it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." (Heb. ii. 10.) Be ye holy as God is holy, and perfect as God is perfect. (1 Peter i. 16; Matt. v. 48; Luke vi. 36—40.) The com-



mand is given because it is connected with a blessing: it is as if God had told his family, It is my determination to make you as perfect as the hand of Omnipotence can make you: therefore keep the blessing primarily and perpetually in view.

I. "*Thy will be done.*" The first thing to be considered is THE SECRET WILL OF GOD.

We are not only in the infancy, but in the twilight of existence, while the inhabitants of this earth. There are many secrets which undoubtedly will be communicated to us hereafter, which we cannot bear at present. Our Saviour said to his disciples, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." (John xvi. 12.) "Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face." (1 Cor. xiii. 12.)

The secret will of God has in every thing his own glory in view, involving in it the welfare of his church. There is light enough in this truth to illumine the darkest dispensations, and enable us to see the footsteps of our heavenly Father travelling before us, in the night of deepest distress here on earth. "Clouds and darkness are round about him, but righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne." (Ps. xcvii. 2.) "How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" (Rom. xi. 33.)

God is the only being who has a right to keep

a secret : no finite being has. Every finite being is obliged to expose himself wholly, and unreservedly, to the eye of God—willingly now, or unwillingly in eternity. All the claims of justice and mercy require this at the hands of every finite being. God is the only being who is wholly at his own disposal, the only being who is not accountable for any thing that he does. We are necessarily accountable for all things : he is accountable for nothing. Now if finite beings are under an obligation to unbosom themselves fully, it must be to the infinite Being. Ascriptions of praise, and confessions of sin, involve in them a positive act of worship.

Hear me, my brethren ; young people, do justice to what I am about to tell you :—the members of the Church of Rome, in confessing their sins to the priest, invest the priest with the attributes of Deity. Some, I am ashamed to say, of our own church, would have us be silent on this subject : we dare not. It is our duty to expose the errors of the Romish church, if so be, by the divine blessing, some may be rescued from the night of superstition, and introduced to the noon of gospel-day. The real fact is, that the confession of *every thing* that passes within the human mind involves in it an act of worship. And now, my brethren, what do you think of undeifying Deity, and deifying a wretched mortal like ourselves ?

There are times and seasons when we not only may, but ought to confess our sins to each other ; but our confessions to each other should be under the direction of sound wisdom and prudence. For instance ; if we offend each other, it becomes us to confess our sins, and to solicit forgiveness, not only at the hand of God, but at the hands of men ; and in some doubtful and perplexing cases, when the young especially know not what to do, it is well to consult with some one older and wiser than themselves, one whose character is established for sound wisdom and true piety : but the mutual confession of *all* sin would only tend to mutual corruption. God never intended that the corruptions of the human heart should be deposited in any bosom but his own. Consider the evil that must result to society, when all the sins of a family are made known beyond the circle of that family. When confession is to be made, to whom ought the wife to unbosom herself, next to her God, but to her husband ? To whom ought the daughter to confess but to her mother ? To whom ought the son to confess but to his father ? I ask you, husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, are not these things in perfect unison with your own feelings ? To unbosom *the whole* of what passes within the human heart to any one but God, is high treason against the King of kings.

But to return : God has his secret will, and it is ceaselessly engaged in working out our salvation. May we then be engaged in working out our own salvation with fear and trembling.

1. Consider, then, in the first place, *the supremacy of God* in “working all things after the counsel of his own will.” (Eph. i. 11.) There is only one thing which guides the will of God, and that is the infinite perfection of his nature : this influences his will perpetually. Some have contended for a freedom of the will that is not to be found even in Deity ; for even in Deity it is not independent of the disposition ; it is impossible that it should be so.

The will of every being is wholly connected with his disposition. This is the reason why there is such perfection in the will of Jehovah ; it is wholly connected with his own essence. Freedom of will, in the sense in which some contend for it, is not to be found in God himself : it has no existence but in the dreams, the awfully delusive dreams, of error. The will of God ceaselessly moves under the influence of his own perfections : nothing less than this could possibly be a security to us.

2. His will is declared in scripture to be *holy, just, and good* : and why ? Because it is wholly connected with his essence. His will is only an emanation of his essence : and by the manifestation of his will, he shows us what he is. “The

Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works." (Ps. cxlv. 17.)

3. In the secret, as well as in the revealed will of God, his *Omnipotence* is to be considered. Every thing he wills must inevitably come to pass. God is the only being who knows no rival; and he is the only being who cannot be opposed with success. He knows no difficulty. A congregated universe would present no greater obstacle to him, than if he were opposed by a fly. The Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?" (Isa. xiv. 27.) He is in one mind and who can turn him? and what his soul desireth, even that he doeth." (Job xxiii. 13.) "He doeth according to his will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth." (Dan. iv. 35.)

I now proceed to assign a few weighty reasons, why we should be ardently desirous of being in all things submissive to the secret will of God.

1. Beause God is *infinitely wise*, as well as infinitely holy, just, and good. The purpose of God must involve in it his own perfection. In reading the history of the saints of old, we find them in the midst of the deepest distress, using this language, "It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth him good." (1 Sam. iii. 18.) And when the Saviour himself was approaching the scene of his sufferings, and tasting the bitterness of

that cup, the dregs of which he afterwards drank, he said, "Not my will, but thine be done." (Luke xxii. 42.) "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" (John xvii. 11.) It is the highest honour that can be conferred upon a creature, in the midst of the most calamitous circumstances, to be enabled to say, "Thy will be done." It will certainly be well with him; and, though calamities may threaten to overwhelm and to crush him, yet all will be made subservient in some respect or other to his exaltation.

2. Because suffering is very frequently the offspring of our own transgression. "I will bear," said one of old, "the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him; until he plead my cause and execute judgment for me." Now he looks *forward*: "He will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness." (Micah vii. 9.) This is signally consolatory. When the believer is conscious of having involved himself in affliction by his own sins, even then it is his privilege to look up to the Lord, and to bear his chastisement, assured that some great good will be produced by it; for the rod of chastisement, in the hand of our heavenly Father, is destined to be, and will be productive of good to his child. The scriptures on this head do not leave us in the dark, they tell us what the benefit will be; and thus furnish another reason for submission to the will of God!



3. Because suffering is designed to take away sin. It does not indeed take away sin in a *meritorious* point of view ; this is the work of God : but as an agent it does ; it is made instrumental in embittering sin to his family, and in making them grateful for the rod with which he is pleased to visit them. God himself tells us, by the pen of his inspired prophet, “ By this, therefore, shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged ; and *this is all the fruit, to take away his sin.*” The Lord has many agents in separating his people from their sins, and he does all things in a manner worthy of himself ; while he has invariably in view the welfare of his child. Bear then the chastisement of the Lord. It is hard to bear, perhaps, week after week, month after month, year after year ; but it shall be well at the last : we shall thank him in heaven for the pains, as well as for the joys, of earth. “ Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous : nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.” (Heb. xii. 11.)

4. Because we are destined in our sufferings to be conformed to his Son. “ Though he were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered.” (Heb. v. 8.) It is a great honour to suffer, because in suffering we are made more like Christ. Many individuals are enabled by the



Lord to rejoice in the midst of their sufferings, and to be grateful for them.

5. Because sufferings usher in the goodness of God. They are instrumental of much good in his hands. Shimei was suffered to curse David; but blessing from the Lord followed it. Job, when he had been severely tried, came forth like gold out of the furnace. It is the exclusive prerogative of God to educe good from evil; and this he will do, not in *one single* instance only, but in *every* instance in which his family are visited with evil, during the period of their sojourning here on earth. "Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time; casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you." (1 Peter v. 6, 7.)

6. Because sufferings teach patience. To specify the highest good we can derive from them on this side eternity, St. Paul presents us with a most interesting climax in the fifth chapter of his epistle to the Romans. He begins by saying, "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." And then he goes on, "And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of

God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." *Our graces are brought to the test by suffering* : without suffering, I do not see how we could learn the weakness of finite being : nor do I see how, without suffering, we could be made intimately acquainted with the power of God in upholding us. This is what the apostle received from the Lord ; and it is a blessing proffered to all his family : "My grace is sufficient for thee ; for my strength is made perfect in weakness." (2 Cor. xii. 9.)

In the midst of sufferings, then, think not of your own weakness, but of the strength of God : I believe it might be proved that martyrs, while going to the stake, dwelt more upon the power of God to be given to them for their support through their sufferings, than on the sufferings themselves ; and thus they triumphed, in one sense, before they began to suffer.

7. Because sufferings try and prove principles ; they try and prove our faith. "When I am tried, (says holy Job,) I shall come forth as gold." We are much more intimately acquainted with the reality of religion in our own souls when in the furnace of affliction than at other times. It is the will of God that his family, so long as they are strangers and pilgrims on earth, should suffer more or less ; but all the time his secret will pervades the whole, and guides to the most glorious issue : "Wherein ye greatly rejoice,

though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness, through manifold temptations: that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ." (1 Pet. i. 6, 7.)

II. I come now to consider THE REVEALED WILL OF GOD. And we are peculiarly interested in this; because it is in studying the *revealed* will of God, that we learn how to be submissive to his *secret* will; all that we require to know being contained in the volume of inspiration.

1. We should learn his will to keep us from error. Our Lord tells the Jews that they erred, "not knowing the Scriptures." (Mark xii. 24. Matt. xxii. 29.) They asked him many questions, which, had they studied Scripture attentively, they would have been able to solve themselves. Study the Scriptures, my young friends, in your early years. God intended that his family should be well acquainted with his word. Be ambitious of knowing it, and of having your memories well stored with it. Learn some portion every day; consider well its connexion, and treasure it in your minds. In doing this, you will arm yourselves against trials and temptations, the truth which lies hid in memory will speak, and that

effectually, by borrowing and using the voice of God himself.

2. We should learn the will of God, that we may discipline our own wills by his. The will of a finite being, when it deviates, in the least degree, from the revealed will of God, is in a state of rebellion against him. I am not now alluding to believers in a state of grace here below ; but, to our first parents in Eden, and to angels who fell. There can be no partial deviation from the will of God ; it is absolute and entire. When angels fell, they acted according to their own will, which deviated from the will of God, and they ruined themselves. Our first parents did the same ; both gave themselves wholly to enmity and rebellion against God.

I would now endeavour to assign a few reasons, why an humble inquiry into the will of God may prove eminently useful. I do not mean that it is wise curiously to pry into the things which God has intentionally concealed from us ; by no means : but to search into every thing he has revealed, which involves in it our own welfare, as well as the glory of God in our salvation, must be an imperative duty.

1. Man's own will destroyed him ; and it invariably leads its possessor to court destruction. Witness what I have just alluded to in the conduct of angels, and our first parents. Witness the conduct of great part of the human race :

only observe the conduct of individuals presented to us day after day : all echoes the truth of Scripture, "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself." (Hosea .xiii. 9.) Man's will produces nothing of itself but his destruction : nothing will more effectually destroy the transgressor, than to let him have his own will, his own way. How wise, then, and how benevolent, the prayer, "*Thy* will be done." The wisdom of the child of God consists in praying, "Thy will, not mine, be done," O my God ! (Ezra vii. 18. Matt. xxvi. 39.)

2. Our own will is naturally and perpetually opposed to God. "The carnal mind is enmity against God." (Rom. viii. 7.) And why is the will opposed to God ? Because the disposition is opposed to him, wholly opposed. The will moves according to the disposition ; if the disposition were partially good, there would be partial good in the will ; but the disposition is wholly evil ; and so is the will. We only understand this, when we have been called from the darkness of nature, to the light of gospel truth by the Spirit of the living God. "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh : and these are contrary the one to the other ; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." (Gal. v. 17.)

3. Again—and hear me, thoughtless sinner ; digest the truth I am going to tell you. *Your*

*own will is invariably opposed to your own salvation.* It not only brings you into a state of destruction, but keeps you there. All your volitions are opposed to a God of mercy. "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." (Rom. ix. 16.) And why? Because man wills his own destruction. Our Lord Jesus Christ does not trace the destruction of the Jews to the will of God, but to their own sinful act: "Ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life." (John v. 40.) Their sinfulness, and perseverance in sin, were traced wholly, and exclusively to themselves. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, *and ye would not!*" (Matt. xxiii. 37.) Hence the wisdom and benevolence of the prayer, "Thy will be done." It is only the will of God, turning and disciplining the human will, that disposes man to seek, as he ought, the salvation of his own immortal spirit.

4. We have the example of Christ. "I came down from heaven," says our blessed Lord, "not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." (John vi. 38.) His Father's will was *his* will continually; his own will was wholly absorbed in that of his Father. What a happiness—what a blessing; to have a will like that of the



Lord Jesus Christ ; and to realize this, we must be under the influence of the same Spirit, the Spirit of the Father and the Son ; the Spirit that rules and reigns in the humanity of Jesus before the throne in glory.

5. Lastly. We have the command of Christ, " If any man will come after me, let him deny himself : " (Matt. xvi. 54 :) if any man will come after me *let him do my will* : that is, let him be influenced not by his own will, but by mine.

III. "*On earth as it is in heaven.*" The will of God is to be done,

1. Zealously. O the zeal that lives in heaven ; we can form no adequate idea of it. There all intellects are fully engaged in adoring the perfections of God ; in perusing the love which prompted Messiah to descend from the summit of glory, to the depth of our hell. And their hearts are engaged as ardently ; this is the glory of their worship : and this was the case with our first parents, when they came from the hands of God. But it is not so with us. We know far more than we practise. We have more in our heads, than in our hearts. We need all of us to be more under the influence of the Spirit of the living God ; to be more like saints and angels in heaven. " Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers *a flame of fire*," (Heb. i. 7,) evidently betokening the spirituality, and intense-



ness of their worship. But when we look at the conduct of our Lord *on earth*, we find something more interesting to us than the obedience of saints and angels in heaven. Witness the alacrity and delight with which he went to Jerusalem ; he hastened thither on the wings of love to God and man. He went to throw himself into the hands of his enemies, that he might humble himself to death, even the death of the cross. Yes, he hasted to throw himself to the bottom of the abyss, in which his family were : (I speak correctly, for though an abyss, it was fathomed by Deity :) *there* he found them, and thence he raises them to the zenith of glory.

2. Promptly. Wherever affection lives, it always leads to this. Mark the conduct of the obedient child who loves his father ; no sooner are the father's wishes expressed, than they are obeyed. " I made haste and delayed not to keep thy commandments," says the Psalmist, (Ps. cxix. 60,) who was an eminent type of Christ.

3. Diligently. We do not like to see individuals indolent when engaged in any laudable earthly pursuit. The Psalmist says, " Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently." (Ps. cxix. 4.) Indolence is as strong a proof of hypocrisy and deceit, as diligence is of sincerity and zeal.

4. Uninterruptedly. When we read of those superior beings in heaven who are engaged in

worshipping God, and singing, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty," it is added, they "rest not day and night." (Rev. iv. 8.) They are engaged in the delightful work of uninterrupted service.

5. As in the presence of God. He who serves God as he ought, courts his eye continually. May the Lord confer this blessing upon us individually, as it involves the strongest proof of spiritual integrity ; and not only so, but a consciousness of that integrity in the bosom of the worshipper himself. It is said of the angels in heaven, those angels who are ministering to the heirs of salvation below, that they are *in the presence* of God, worshipping him perpetually. The Psalmist gives us a singularly striking example of that true, sublime, honest devotion in which God delights, when he says, "I have set the Lord always before me." (Ps. xvi. 8.) And how did he view him ? With the eye of the intellect exclusively ? No ; with the eye of his heart ; involving what I told you of confession ; he threw open his whole heart, and exposed every thing within his bosom to the eye of the Lord. If we do not this, we cannot enter into the spirit of the prayer, "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven."—"In heaven, then, angels do always behold the face of my Father, which is in heaven." (Mat. xviii. 10.)

6. With the welfare of our fellow-creatures in

view. Doubtless, angels above are intently occupied with the service of God. God fills their bosoms continually ; and for this reason, they are most intently occupied with the salvation of sinners. "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" It is the love of God—it is the worship of God, in all its glory, that gives the soul full leisure to attend to every thing that is lovely. O may we ever pray for each other, and do to each other all the good we can ; that we may travel like a little band of brethren, towards the Canaan above, assured that the powers of hell must fall before us, and be eventually trampled under our feet.

But we have a higher example than that of angels—the example of the Saviour himself ; who was incessantly engaged in the service of his Father, and at the same time of his brethren also. Let us imitate him.

To conclude, learn a few lessons.

1. To lament daily the evil that is within you. Thus the apostle went on,—“O wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” (Rom. vii. 24.) Some professors of religion, and I am sorry to say some ministers, seem to talk as if we were to forget sin. If you forget sin, you will most assuredly forget Christ. It is impossible to remember Christ without remembering sin.

2. Connected with this, rejoice daily in Jesus Christ. The apostle tells us with the same breath, "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. vii. 25.) The Psalmist says, "I have set the Lord always before me." (Ps. xvi. 8.) And not only so, but in another place, "My sin is ever before me." (Ps. li. 3.) His own sins, and the mercy of God, were continually in his view. Their sins, and the sacrifice for sin, perpetually presented themselves to the minds of the Psalmist, and Apostle. May God give us the same feeling, that it may produce in us the same effects!

3. We should be ambitious to set a bright example to others. We know that saints of old condemned the world by their conduct. Worldly people will not read the Bible; they will not read what is recorded against them in this book; they will not read the mercy of God, and his delight in obedience. Be it your care, then, to present to them, daily, God's own edition of the Bible; that which he inscribes with his own Spirit on the fleshly tables of the human heart. Oblige them to read this, and make them condemn themselves by your conduct. It is said of the infant church, in the Acts of the Apostles, while they were walking in the fear of the Lord, that the loveliness of their deportment attracted the attention of others, and the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved: (Acts ii. 47:) *their* lovely deportment was blessed; follow ye, then, their holy example.

4. We should pray that God would carry on to perfection, in our bosoms, the work of his own hands. Nor would I forget that there is a blissful period to arrive, when the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord: a period is coming, when God will be served on earth, with much of that holy fire with which he is served in heaven. Yes,—Messiah is promised to reign, and reign he will, most gloriously. Then, and not till then, will mankind witness the dissolution of every evil in principle, and of all vice in practice. Amen.

## SERMON VII.

## ON THE LORD'S PRAYER.

MATT. vi. 11.

*Give us this day our daily bread.*

THE more we meditate on this prayer, the more we shall discover its excellence ; evincing, as it does, in the clearest manner, that it flows from the bosom, and from the lips, of him who is God.

Infidelity is, in one respect, a very formidable, and, in another point of view, a very contemptible enemy : formidable indeed to those who will not honestly peruse the volume of inspiration ; formidable indeed to those who are determined to follow the bent of their own corrupt dispositions ; for corruption in the heart darkens the intellect, and makes him, who is the slave of his passions, as easy a victim of error in doctrine, as he is of sin in practice.

On the other hand, infidelity is an enemy contemptible in the extreme to one whose ears are opened to listen to the voice of God. As soon as the spiritual eye of man beholds the glory of revelation, he stands no more in need of the external evidences of Christianity than he does of the aid of the optician or the astronomer to prove that the sun is in the firmament of heaven, when his eye is enjoying its glories.

There is one thing peculiarly interesting in this prayer, and which pervades the whole. It flows from all the sympathy of the Saviour as man, as well as from all his love as God. He did not stand in need of mercy as we do ; but he stood in need of daily bread, and was as dependent upon his Father for it as we are. We find, that now and then he deprived himself for a season so completely of the things of time and sense, that he was dependent on his own creatures for subsistence. The richest in heaven and the poorest on earth at the same moment ! May we keep this in view while we are dwelling on the interesting truth in the text !

One perfection, among countless others, in the Saviour, was this ; that he never cherished an idea of receiving any thing but at the hands of his God. The Independent from eternity became, in time, as dependent as any of his own family ; and this is another thing to be considered in the exquisite sympathy of Messiah. He fed



the universe himself: his hand was stretched forth in conferring blessings on all; while at the same time he was dependent on his own family for daily food.

“Give us this day our daily bread.”

I. Consider THE BLESSING, “*bread* ;” and,

1. First of all, It is the gift of God. Every thing that is good, without exception, is the gift of God. Every thing, of every kind, in every degree: “God giveth to all life, and breath, and all things.” (Acts xvii. 25.) “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above.” (James i. 17.) All things which all worlds receive, at the hands of God, are his ceaseless gift. But the bread we eat is to be considered in another point of view: it is not only the gift of God, but his gift to us, in infinite worth.

2. The daily bread we eat is the purchase of the blood of Immanuel. “Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name,” says our blessed Lord, “he will give it you;” (John xvi. 23;) and for this obvious reason,—all things, all the blessings of time as well as those of eternity, are the purchase of a sacrifice; of that sacrifice which was once offered on Calvary. With what an interesting truth does this present us! Our tables are daily spread, not only by the hand, but at the expense of a benevolent and beneficent God. All the wealth of heaven is daily presented to

us in the food we eat, and in the water we drink. The idea of receiving every thing fully and freely from the hand of God, must have given an exquisite zest to all that our first parents enjoyed in Eden. In the food they ate, and in the water they drank, I shall not express myself too strongly if I say, they tasted God. His goodness sweetened every thing. God intended that all we eat, and all we drink, should perpetually remind us of his love in giving his Son to die for us. Every thing is purchased for us by Jesus Christ. We have forfeited every thing by sin, and forfeited every thing for ever. The whole world was given to Adam, and he was made monarch of all ; but he lost it in a very short time. Jesus Christ has purchased the whole to bestow it upon his own family : “ The meek shall inherit the earth.” (Matt. v. 5.) O that the thoughtless sons and daughters of Adam would take this truth into consideration !

We cannot do justice to our bodies without first doing justice to our souls. And indeed we find that the wicked in reality neglect both. It was intended that in all things we should keep the Lord Jesus Christ perpetually in view. God grant that we may be enabled to do it, looking to him for every thing we need while we are inhabitants of time ; and receiving all at his hands as earnest and pledges of a blissful eternity.

But, alas ! alas ! if we look abroad into the world, as we are obliged to do daily, we cannot live without witnessing, in a thousand instances, how the things of time and sense are abused. God the giver is forgotten ; Christ the purchaser is forgotten ; the body that is to be redeemed, and the soul that is to be saved, all, all are forgotten.

3. It is to be prayed for collectively. “ Give *us* this day *our* daily bread.” Not individually *my* daily bread ; by no means : *me* and *my* enter into the language of unregenerate man exclusively ; of man as he is, a sinner. Man’s transgression has made him exclusively a selfish being. Self is his idol, and is primarily and perpetually in his view. Read the history of mankind before the introduction of Christianity, and you will not want awful proof of this ; while it must ever be remembered, that the sublime morals taught in the Christian religion have had a very happy effect, in some respects, on many who never received their spirituality.

“ Give *us* this day *our* daily bread.” The perfection of God’s gospel involves in it the perfection of his law. The law when it originally emanated from God, required that man should love his neighbour as himself, and for the best of all reasons ; they occupy the same scale in existence ; they are the creation of the same God ; they are equally dear to him ; and the

very nature of things requires that each should love each, as each loves himself, in the state of discipline in which we are placed at the present moment, preparatory to the perfection of heaven.

“ *Our*” bread—not *my* bread—teaching us that it is impossible for us to pray honestly for ourselves individually without praying for ourselves collectively ; without praying for each other as brethren and sisters in the Lord. “ Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.” (Phil. ii. 4.) The law requires this love as a duty, the gospel confers it as a blessing : so that, evidently in the hearts of God’s believing people, all the glories of the law, and all the blessings of the gospel, are destined to live eternally involved in each other.

II. Secondly. Consider the petition for DAILY BREAD.

1. Our daily labour does not, and cannot purchase any thing at the hands of God. If a finite being were to labour for millions of ages, he would never merit any thing at the hands of God ; all the pure spotless obedience of the angelic hosts, has never merited any thing. The Saviour must be one who is capable of purchasing at the hands of God. Finite beings can never be his creditors, they must remain his debtors for ever. And this

is in perfect unison with the language of all those who know themselves. Hear what the ancient patriarch says, “ I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth which thou hast showed unto thy servant.” (Gen. xxxii. 10.) Not worthy of the *least*, then certainly not worthy of the greatest.

2. Secondly. We have no right to any creature, no right even to ourselves, but as the gift of God in Christ. We are taught this again and again in Scripture ; and, if disciplined by the divine Spirit, our own experience must fully echo the voice of inspiration. “ The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts.” (Hagg. ii. 8.) “ Every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills.” (Ps. l. 10.) “ Behold, the heaven, and the heaven of heavens, is the Lord’s thy God ; the earth also, with all that therein is.” (Deut. x. 14.) Every thing is his.

3. Thirdly. We pray for our daily bread, that we may be daily blessed in the reception and use of all the mercies which God is pleased to confer upon us. Hear the promise which comes from his own lips respecting his church : “ I will abundantly bless her provision ; I will satisfy her poor with bread.” (Ps. cxxxii. 15.) “ Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving : for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.” (1 Tim. iv. 4, 5.)

## III. Consider the emphatic term "BREAD."

1. Bread is symbolical of him who is the bread of life ; and of those spiritual blessings which are destined to keep the soul alive for ever and ever, and eventually the body, after its re-union with the immortal spirit. "I am the living bread which came down from heaven ; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever : and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." (John vi. 51.) We cannot pray for the bread which perisheth, unless we pray likewise for him who is the bread of life. God will not hear our prayers for daily bread, unless we pray, first of all, for that bread which endureth to everlasting life. God will not give the least of his gifts to any, with a blessing upon it, without giving the greatest. He gives nothing that is truly and permanently good to any one, without first giving himself. The bread of life in the first place ; and then that which is necessary to support our frail bodies.

2. Secondly. The term BREAD is used as it implies every thing that is necessary for the preservation of the natural life. "If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread (or food) to eat ; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink." (Prov. xxv. 21.)

3. Thirdly. The term BREAD is used because it was evidently the intention of God to teach us simplicity and temperance in the use of all earthly things. The simplicity and temperance I am



speaking of at the present moment, necessarily involve in them the welfare of body and mind. When is the intellect most clear? Under the influence of temperance. When are the fine feelings of the human heart in their highest exercise? Under the influence of temperance. Where does God himself deign to fix his throne? In the bosom of the temperate, not of the intemperate. True wisdom, as we shall see toward the conclusion of my discourse, would lead us perpetually, in seeking at the hand of God what is necessary for our support, to seek also the welfare of the immortal spirit, involving, as it does in the highest degree, the welfare of the body, which is destined to perish. "Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content." (1 Tim. vi. 8.)

#### IV. There is to be DAILY PRAYER FOR DAILY BREAD.

1. To keep alive and to invigorate a spirit of devotion in the human heart; and to teach us that in the use of every thing here below, we should keep up a daily intercourse with Heaven. Oh! my friends, when I think of the spirituality and glory of that holy religion, a minister of which I am, (although the most unworthy,) I sometimes tremble at my own responsibility. Do I keep all these truths in view as I ought? Do I think of God and of souls as I ought? Alas! alas! I too often fail of my duty. But



there follows another portion of this prayer, "forgive us our trespasses:" when I think of this my heart is cheered; and when I call to mind that there is an Advocate above who once bore the sins of his family in his own body on the tree, and who still bears them in his intercession before the throne above, then do I take courage, and go forward.

God likes to hear the prayer of his people. God delights more in intercourse with believing sinners here below, than in intercourse with the angels above. He wishes to hear the voice of his people: this is the reason why he often visits them with severe chastisements, that they may pray to him: "men ought always to pray, and not to faint." (Luke xviii. 1.) They ought to ask God for every thing, and tremble at the idea of receiving any thing from his hands, but in Jesus Christ.

2. To teach us to be fully satisfied with a present supply; that we may dismiss all corroding cares as to futurity; and in this respect, as well as in many others, Scripture recommends to our attention the simplicity of children. "Take no thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." (Matt. vi. 34.) It is in this childlike simplicity of which I am speaking, that the Lord imparts energy to his family to bear every afflictive dispensation. When

they meet with the evils of the day, they too often connect them with the evils of to-morrow, in many cases imaginary evils, and they sink under the load; and no wonder, for they take upon their shoulders a forbidden load. *To-morrow is the care of God*; to-day is what you have to think of: and I charge you that you make it a subject of prayer to the Lord that you may live without thinking of to-morrow. This seems to be absolutely necessary to give the mind that elasticity and rich leisure, which are requisite to enable it to carry on a ceaseless intercourse with heaven, and with the God of heaven and earth. Oh! my brethren, how many things have frightened us which were exclusively the creatures of our own imagination; but though imaginary, there have been often real and serious evils emanating from them. We have weakened our own souls; we gave our spiritual adversaries the advantage over us; we suffered them to range themselves in battle-array against us between our covenant God and ourselves. May God grant that this may never be the case in future!

3. To keep us in daily preparation for death. "Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." (Prov. xxvii. 1.) In my humble judgment, it is unlawful to pray, "give me *to-morrow* my bread;" for this reason, *to-night I may die*. If I am truly wise, I shall

pray only for this day ; and if God give me further time, I can then devote it to him.

4. To teach us to live honestly, and to eat the fruit of our own labour. O how far is he removed from dishonesty who trusts his God ! In the midst of thousands of gold and silver, in the midst of every temptation to which he can be exposed, he will have nothing but what God himself presents to him ; and therefore, depending on the truth of God, he honours his commandment—“ Provide things honest in the sight of all men.” (Rom. xii. 17.) To what is dishonesty frequently to be traced ? To unbelief ; the monarch sin of men and devils. Would individuals have been guilty of stealing, if they had been taught to pray to, and trust in God ? By no means.

5. To teach us industry in our respective callings, trades, and professions ; but first of all, and above all, spiritual industry : for he who is most industrious at a throne of grace, will be most industrious every where else, both in things temporal and spiritual. “ Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.” (Rom. xii. 11.) Idleness is a dreadful snare to man ; no one but God himself knows what have been its consequences ; it is inhabited by, if I may so speak, ten thousand enemies to the human body, as well as the human soul.

From this subject, learn,

1. Not to envy those who neither work nor

pray, and yet have abundance given to them. God is a sovereign, and may give, if he please, to his enemies; though he will bring them to an awful account at last. God never promised his children abundance of earthly things. But, in the blessings of Providence we see God delights in imparting every good to his creatures; and why do we not receive more? Because we do not know how to acknowledge the hand of God in the blessings of his providence: if men were wise and prudent, they would see that he invites them to himself by these means. I have his own authority for this: "Despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance!" (Rom. ii. 4.) This is its immediate tendency. To say that man's corrupt propensities militate against this, does not invalidate the truth itself in the least degree. "But after thy hardness and impenitent heart, *treasurest up unto thyself* wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God." (Rom. ii. 5.)

They who have an independent fortune, if wise and temperate in the use of the things of time, have the richest leisure to scrutinize the book of God, to examine its invaluable contents, and to compare it with what passes in their own minds. All excuses on the score of disabilities will avail nothing in the last day. There are a thousand

things which men omit to do, and which they certainly might do.

2. Let the poor learn patience, submission, and gratitude, in an humble sphere of life. Man is prone to abuse every thing : this seems to be the reason why the Lord, for the most part, keeps his own family in a lowly station. "A rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle." (Matt. xix. 23, 24.) But all the difficulties inhabit his own bosom : if disposed to part with his sins, there is no other obstacle. Must he part with the things that God has given him ? No, my brother ; let him only cease to abuse them ; there will then be no greater difficulty in his way, than in the way of a poor man.

3. Let the rich man learn to impart to the poor, and thus imitate God. "He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord." (Prov. xix. 17.) You, to whom the Lord has given the things of time and sense, be liberal. Remember, God has given these things to you as *treasurers* ; they never were your own, and cannot be exclusively your own ; they are as much the Lord's now as they were before. He gave you these blessings, for blessings they certainly are. Live to God ; and receive them as from his hands, and thus you will make the best use of them. But woe to those who hoard up money, and worship a golden god. Some one has observed, that

“money is like manure, it does no good till it is spread.” O that many who are rich, but whom we cannot consider in the judgment of charity as liberal, were more alive to the high honour of giving as much as they can, every day, to the glory of God, and to promote the best interests of their fellow-men.

4. We are emphatically taught here not to seek superfluities at the hand of God, but only necessities. We are forbidden to do it. “Give us this day our *daily bread*.” Need I remind you of the prayer of an eminently holy man? “Two things have I required of thee; deny me them not before I die: remove far from me vanity and lies; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me; lest I be full and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.” (Prov. xxx. 7—9.) Is not this book from above? Most assuredly. Where does this spirit come from? From the Author of the prayer whence I took my text: it is a faithful echo of the truth I am now maintaining.

Lastly, and to conclude. Let daily prayer be crowned with daily praise. There is something defective in our prayers when they do not lead to praise. One striking proof that God answers prayer is, that the individual who is blessed with the answer, praises the Lord. “When thou hast



eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the Lord thy God." (Deut. viii. 10 ; Isa. lxii. 9.) Praise him for every thing ; not only for spiritual blessings, but for temporal blessings likewise. Praise him for every thing that descends from heaven to earth, in the Son of his love, Jesus Christ. Receive all things at the hands of God in him, and let every thing ascend from you to God through him. If we do justice then to what I have stated, it follows clearly, that we cannot eat and drink as we ought without involving in it an act of worship : it follows, that we cannot eat and drink as we ought, without rejoicing in the Lord our Saviour ; that we cannot do it acceptably without praising him while the food is in our mouths. True religion leads to this. May it lead *us* to this !

Suffer no sense of past unworthiness to deter you from praising the Lord. The highest honours are reserved for those who have been most unworthy, when they come to God to solicit them freely at his hands. God intended that we should praise him in all the relationships of time and sense. Though we may not attain to perfection, yet let us keep perfection perpetually in view, at all times and in all places ; that in whatsoever we may be engaged, we may have the glory of God always in view. "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." (1 Cor. x. 31.) This, my



brethren, will do more for the body, as well as for the soul, than all the physicians in the kingdom. The joy of the Lord is medicine not only for the soul, but for the body likewise. O may we know what it is to appreciate the things of time and sense, by considering them as the purchase of the blood of Immanuel ! and may we never presume to lay our hand upon any thing, unless we see the hand of God stretched out, and presenting us with it in the Son of his love, Jesus Christ ! This is the spirit of true Christianity : God grant that we may live and die under its holy and blissful influence ! that we may ascend from earth to heaven, leaving behind all that is earthly ; to live without eating, to live without drinking, to live without sleeping, to live without being weary ; to live, my brethren, eternally with God himself, our spiritual food ; without the intervention of any thing between us and himself ; to drink of his glory for ever, with all the faculties of the human intellect, and with all the energies of the human heart.

## SERMON VIII.

## ON THE LORD'S PRAYER.

MATT. vi. 12.

*And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.*

THERE is more than conviction in the religion of Jesus Christ. The devil is convinced of its truth, but not conscious of its excellence. We should endeavour to ascend above conviction to consciousness, and while here on earth be as much like the angels as possible.

“*And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.*” Infinite Wisdom has connected this part of the Lord's Prayer with that which immediately precedes it; “Give us this day our daily bread; and then, “Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors;” for these evident reasons:—

1. Because daily bread and daily water would be a daily curse without the forgiveness of God.

When I look abroad into the world, I could call it the Bedlam of sin and Satan; and such it would be without a physician. Thanks be to God, he himself is its Physician.

Those who eat their daily bread, and drink their daily water, without the mercy of God, are eating and drinking inflammables for hell itself. I could prove this with the most lucid arguments, would time permit. As soon as the soul leaves the body, the breath of the Almighty will kindle the whole into one eternal fire.

The influence of sin is beyond the calculation of any finite being. Sin has bartered the human soul. Man is as insensible of the presence of God, and as regardless of it, as if he were a stock or a stone. The brute creation reproach him perpetually: the dog approaches his benefactor with love and gratitude in his eyes; while the language of his heart seems to be, "I will lay down my life for you, whenever you please."

If we cast our eyes over this thoughtless world, we shall see how in the midst of all the respectabilities and decencies of life, God is forgotten. Are any of you, my brethren, living in this way; receiving, or rather stealing every thing from the hands of God; returning nothing to him in love and gratitude? Let me ask you, is it consistent with his perfections that you should be suffered to go on thus for ever? Is it consistent with the well-being of

civil society, that individuals who violate the law of the land, and disturb the peace of the community, should go on without punishment? No: God himself must be unrighteous if he does not punish you. This is not too strong language: I have weighed it well, and it is necessary to speak thus, to awaken men from their sleep of death, while they are dreaming of mercy, and know nothing of their need of it.

2. Daily impenitence provokes God to hide his face even from his own family. Some persons have an idea, that if once introduced into the family of God, God cannot be angry with them. My brethren, perhaps I am correct in saying, that in one sense God is more angry with his own family than with the devil himself. Is this anger consistent with his love? some may ask. Is the anger of an affectionate father consistent with *his* love? Most assuredly. And perhaps when his anger descends, we find more love in his chastisements than in any thing else; God seems to complain of his own family when he says, "Mine eyes are upon all their ways: they are not hid from my face, neither is their iniquity hid from mine eyes." (Jer. xvi. 17.) "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear." (Isa. lix. 2.) Daily mercy then is absolutely necessary, otherwise our daily food cannot be a blessing to us: we are

indeed forgiven by God as a judge ; but we shall stand in need of *daily* forgiveness at his hands as a parent, till sin ceases to be in us.

3. No temporal good will avail us anything without mercy. Every temporal advantage, independent of the blessing of God, is an evil considered in itself. It is the prerogative of God to educe good from every evil, but the creature, when left to himself, educes evil from every good. Man, under the influence of his corruption, like the spider, extracts poison from every thing ; but under the influence of divine grace, he is like the bee, sucking honey every where. May God teach *us* this divine art ; he has covenanted to do it.

It is to be observed, that we are taught to pray, “Forgive us *our* debts,” as well as “give us *our* daily bread.” It is not lawful for an individual to pray for himself alone, except in some peculiar circumstances in which his brethren are not at all connected ; but even then he is to remember them. A man cannot pray for himself as he ought without praying for his brethren ; prayer offered for ourselves exclusively cannot be acceptable to God. The law of love requires that we should thus pray for others. The Saviour prayed for his brethren, and every prayer for himself involved in it the welfare of his church.

#### I. OF SIN AS A DEBT.

Properly speaking, that is to say, with reference

to the original and primary meaning of the word, sin is not to be considered (certainly not exclusively) as a debt ; but we are to remember that God in his word addresses us in the language which we speak to each other : all the figures, all the metaphors we use, are used by God.

All created beings are debtors to God, and will be for ever : all the hosts of heaven owe to him a debt of obedience. It is an universal truth, and does not except even the humanity of Jesus Christ himself, which owes a debt of obedience, and will for ever owe it. This is evident ; for, as a *finite* and dependent being, his humanity must owe love and obedience to his heavenly Father. As I have told you before, he is the first of subjects as well as the first of kings. But sins are called debts, because by transgression we incur debt. Man by transgression made his debt twofold. In a state of innocence, he was a debtor to the command ; in a state of sin, he is a debtor to the curse as well as the command.

My dear brethren, are any of you determined to live and die the slaves of sin and Satan ? Are any of you determined to close upon yourselves your own prison-doors ? then let me tell you the awful truth ; you will be *debtors eternally* to the command and the curse of God : you will owe him all the perfection of the obedience of heaven, and more than all the miseries of hell ; for finite

being cannot comprise the punishment due to transgression.

If men knew what death is, or rather into what state it ushers the transgressor, they would not leap down the precipice of eternity into such an abyss of sin and misery.

The state of the wicked is too awful to be dwelt upon exclusively : it must be dwelt upon in connexion with the love of God, that the sinner may not only be convinced of his misery, but of the removal of his sins by his covenant head and representative.

In speaking of sin as a debt, we first notice sins of *omission*. Though we evidently see something of a legal spirit in Job, yet, on the whole, he was an humble pious man. When the provocations of his friends assailed him, then the evil of his heart appeared. We discover his imperfection ; yet he was strikingly honest, and his integrity deserves imitation. Listen to what he says : “ How should man be just with God ? If he will contend with him, he cannot answer him one of a thousand.” (Job ix. 3.) And again, speaking of sins of *commission*, Job says, “ How many are mine iniquities and sins ? make me to know my transgression and my sin.” “ That which I see not, teach thou me. If I have done iniquity, I will do no more.” (Job xiii. 23 ; xxxiv. 32.) This was the prayer of honest Job.



All things are conferred upon us by God ; we are indebted to God for them ; they are to be considered as so many talents—yes, ourselves and all our faculties, body, soul, spirit. Our learning, (if we have any,) our skill in science, (if we are scientific,) our health, our money, all—all are to be given to God ; and if this be not done, we are contracting debts every moment. We do not know what riches are, till we give them to God.

I remember a most generous father, who loved his child dearly, and used to give him a great deal of money ; but he was sadly afraid lest his child should be a miser, so he used to say to him, “Don’t mind spending your money, I will take care you shall have money enough ; only let me know what you do with it, I will supply you.” O that we knew how to trust the Lord ; if we do not, we are impoverishing our own souls. We do not do justice to God, to his holy religion, till every connexion with earth is involved in our intercourse with heaven.

II. GOD IS MERCIFUL TO SINNERS, IN AND THROUGH HIS SON JESUS CHRIST. And it is consistent with the divine perfections that he should be so, for the following reasons :—

1. Christ was punished for us. “He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities : the chastisement of our peace

was upon him ; and with his stripes we are healed.” (Isa. liii. 5.)

2. He is the only sacrifice for sin, a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour : there is nothing like a sacrifice for sin, but the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Infinity and eternity are absolutely necessary to constitute a sacrifice for sin : and in Christ we find infinity and eternity in humanity like our own, (sin only excepted,) presenting the Father with a sacrifice.

3. He shed his blood to cleanse us from all our sin. The fountain opened on Calvary, infinitely rich in merit, will continue to flow to eternity, laden with all the blessings of heaven ; with God himself, with all that God can bestow upon his family. “The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin ;” (1 John i. 7 ;) this is our comfort, consolation, and triumph.

4. In and through Jesus Christ we are reconciled to God. He is reconciled to us by the shedding of the blood of Jesus Christ ; we are reconciled to him by the sprinkling of his blood on the conscience. (2 Cor. v. 18, 19.) Reconciliation comprises the work of the Spirit, as well as the work of the Saviour. You see I am here reprobating the doctrine of forgiveness before we believe in Jesus Christ ; it is only a new edition of that old error, justification from eternity. Repentance towards God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, are the operation of the Holy

Spirit; flowing from the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and issuing in the glory of God, as a legislator as well as a sovereign; for God is a spiritual governor, as well as a sovereign dispenser of blessings.

5. The Saviour, by his obedience unto death, purchased for us all the blessings of mercy. We ourselves are a purchase. Every temporal and spiritual good which we receive at the hands of God, is the purchase of the death of Christ. It is for this reason that Jesus commands his disciples to pray in his name; and promises that every thing they ask in his name shall be given to them.

Having spoken of the blessings of mercy, as purchased by the death of Christ, I would enumerate a few of them.

1. Peace with God—perfect peace—eternal peace. God is as much at peace (in one respect) with his family here below, as he is with angels above. Yes, my brethren, and even more so. I wish to express myself as strongly as I can, because I am conscious that I stand on scripture ground, and that this is truth. Hear me, then, and treasure the truth in your memories: there is a sense in which God is as much at peace with his family here below, in the midst of their imperfections, as he is with his own Son. It is necessary to state this; for some believers are so deeply exercised, so plagued with a corrupt heart, that they stand in need of these consola-

tions. Hear what St. Paul says: "If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." (Rom. v. 10.)

2. Justification. "By him, all that believe are justified from all things." (Acts xiii. 39.) This is the testimony of Scripture. No charge can be made good against them—not one: it is absolutely impossible. Let us suppose a fellow creature confined in prison for debt: a friend cancels the debt. Can any demand be made upon the original debtor? Can he be kept in prison? Assuredly not.

There is a sense in which the believer is as free from the law as a covenant, as Christ himself is. Some may, perhaps, be disposed to say, You are going too far. No, my friends; but if I preached this exclusively, I should not be going far enough. I pray that God may crown with success my endeavours to preach the whole of what I find in the Bible. Truth will then appear in all its glory, beauty, and symmetry; and none can possibly abuse it but those who are determined to do it, and do it wilfully.

3. Adoption. "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." "Go to my brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, and to my God, and your God." (John i. 12; xx. 17.)

4. Freedom of access to God. "In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him." (Eph. iii. 12.) Are we welcome to the presence of the King of kings? Yes: not an angel in heaven is more welcome than we are. I do not think I should err if I were to say that the believer is the more welcome; and for this reason; he is more nearly related to the Son of God, Jesus Christ. "Boldness," "freedom," "confidence;"—these are the words which are used by St. Paul, when speaking of the believer's access to God.

5. Consolation in the midst of every earthly calamity. Perhaps some of you have noticed what Jesus said to an afflicted individual. Let me read the passage: "And behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus, seeing their faith, said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee." (Matt. ix. 2.) Every blessing follows in the train of mercy. We must suppose this individual to have understood that he who addressed him was the Son of God, and that the Holy Spirit was given to him by the Lord Jesus, enabling him to receive the blessing, for otherwise it could not have reached him; but when our Saviour speaks, the blessings he would impart must reach their destination. Mark, then, the consequences: health of body as well as health of soul. When the Israelites had offended

the Lord, Moses approached him with one word, —‘ mercy !’ He knew that, if successful, every other blessing would follow. The great consolation is this : if my sin be forgiven, then I may rejoice and be glad in the midst of every calamity : heaven is mine, every good that I am capable of receiving is mine ; and with whatever afflictions I may be visited, while I am a stranger and pilgrim here below, they will be only “ blessings in disguise.”

6. Triumph over the fear of death. “ O death, where is thy sting ? O grave, where is thy victory ? The sting of death is sin ; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Cor. xv. 55—57.)

7. And lastly, God himself as a portion and inheritance for ever and ever. Doubtless, there is a place where the Saviour is at the present moment surrounded by his saints and angels ; but we form a very inadequate and incorrect idea of heaven, if we confine it to a place. The believer is the heir of God ; God himself is his portion and inheritance for ever. “ And if children, then heirs ; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.” (Rom. viii. 17.)

III. I am now to consider THE ATTRIBUTES OF THAT DISPOSITION WHICH DOES JUSTICE TO THE MERCY OF GOD IN CHRIST.



1. Penitence. Mercy makes penitent, and keeps penitent. Mercy is not only the parent, but the nurse of true penitence. Need I tell you that a child loves its mother, and loves the food provided for its sustenance?—Nothing but penitence can prize the mercy of God. Judge yourselves then this evening. Do you delight in the mercy of God? This is the strongest proof of real penitence; penitence never fixes its abode in the human bosom, till it delights in the mercy of God. “The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy.” (Ps. cxlvii. 11.) Show me a person who delights in the mercy of God, and I will show you one whose heart has been broken by genuine repentance. Until mercy is known, penitence is but partial, and very imperfect.

2. Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as the only Saviour. All who believe are justified from all things. Faith in Jesus Christ is absolutely necessary; and penitence and faith are indissolubly connected; they proceed from the same principle, and that principle the offspring of the divine Spirit.

3. The yoke of spiritual obedience is prized; it was prized by Christ himself above every thing else. He took upon himself two yokes—the yoke of the curse, and the yoke of the command. He annihilated the former, that the latter might be an easy yoke for his followers for ever: “Take



my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls; for my yoke is easy and my burden is light:" (Matt. xi. 29, 30 :) light, because he has taken from it the whole of the curse. It was a heavy yoke indeed to him, but it is light to us; so light, that it furnishes us with wings, with which to ascend from earth to heaven; so light, that it is lighter than any of the elements, and ascends above them all.

4. Peace with all men. That disposition which prizes mercy delights in peace: "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." (Heb. xii. 14.)

5. It delights to extend forgiveness to others. The Saviour says, "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you." (Matt. vi. 14.)

#### IV. Consider THE ATTRIBUTES OF WHAT I MAY JUSTLY CALL A DISPOSITION WHICH DELIGHTS IN DISPENSING MERCY.

1. It is opposed to a vindictive spirit; it is its mortal enemy. "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves; but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord." (Rom. xii. 19.) There is much folly in a vindictive spirit; as it respects the law of the land and as members of civil society, we are not permitted to avenge ourselves.

It is a disgrace to a man, as a member of civil society, to take the law into his own hands. A man is, generally speaking, and especially when under the influence of sin, a very bad judge in his own cause. But in whatever point of view we consider the subject, the command is, "Avenge not yourselves." We do not know fully what sin is ; we do not know what is due to it. No one but God does ; and therefore no one but God can visit sin. Those who govern in the world visit sins, but only externally, and in some respects : God is the eternal Judge, and vengeance is his. Let this truth be fully considered ; you will not find that any of the Old Testament saints cherished a vindictive disposition. All that can be said of the frequent allusions to the destruction of enemies, in the Psalms, is this ; that they are a perfect transfer of the enemy into the hands of God : and this will always be the case with him who is under the influence of true religion ; he consigns his enemy to God : in so doing he does what is well pleasing to God ; and there is nothing in it that militates against a merciful disposition.

2. It prays that the enemy may not only be forgiven, but converted. " I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." (Matt. v. 44.)

3. It delights to visit an enemy with every possible good ; a merciful disposition delights in the mercy of God, and in being like God. God first loved us when we were enemies. God beheld us in a state of enmity, when he entered into the covenant of eternity, when he sent his Son to die for us. He beholds us in a state of enmity when he sends his Holy Spirit to renew us in the spirit of our minds. “ If thine enemy hunger, feed him ; if he thirst, give him drink ;” (Rom. xii. 20 ;) that is, visit him with the mercy with which God has visited you.

#### V. Consider SOME MOTIVES TO BE MERCIFUL.

1. Our sins against God are infinitely more than our sins against each other. Every sin committed by a brother or a child involves in it a greater evil than that committed by a stranger. We are all the children of God ; God is primarily insulted, and that in the highest degree, by transgression. But could we calculate the number and aggravation of our sins against God, we should have no time to think of the offences we have received from each other ; we should be much better employed in confessing our transgressions against God.

2. Consider how often we have offended and injured others. Solomon was one who knew human nature probably as well as any man that ever lived ; he had an opportunity of reading

himself as well as others. When we hear any speak ill of us we should remember what he says: "Take no heed unto all words that are spoken;—for oftentimes also thine own heart knoweth that thou thyself likewise hast cursed others." (Eccles. vii. 21, 22.) Here you see he sends us into the recesses of our own bosoms. It is wise, my brethren, to view every truth in all its interesting bearings, that it may descend upon us in all its mighty weight, to impress upon our hearts the image of God himself.

3. We should consider God's mercy to us; and this, and this *only*, will be effectual; nothing less will subdue the heart of man, and dispose him to be merciful to his fellow-creatures. (Col. iii. 13.) The mercy of God will break his heart, and dispose him to forgive his bitterest enemy. As an impenitent disposition cannot receive the mercy of God, so neither can an unforgiving disposition receive it. We are invariably disposed to impart and communicate mercy to our brethren, as we are disposed to receive mercy at the hands of God. This is what is involved in that text: "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God." (Mic. vi. 8.)

4. Another reason why we should cherish a merciful disposition is, that it will conduce to our own peace of mind.

Peace cannot inhabit an unmerciful bosom. Peace cannot live there; it is impossible. I have often reminded you, that true religion in one respect involves in it a principle of self-love; and God intended that it should do so. Show me one who is not disposed to be merciful to others, and I will show you one who is not merciful to himself: there is war in his own bosom, if there be enmity against his brother.

5. Consider the prayer of the unmerciful. This is the prayer of the merciful, “And forgive *us our* trespasses, *as* we forgive them that trespass against us.” The prayer of an unmerciful man is, ‘Do not forgive me, I will not forgive them: send me to hell, as I wish to send my brother to hell:’ this is the language of his heart; he may not be able to interpret it himself, but I have felt it to be my duty, as a minister of the gospel, to interpret it for him. He spurns a God of mercy: the language of his heart, fully and faithfully interpreted, is, ‘Depart from me, I desire not the knowledge of thy ways; I will not have thy mercy.’

To conclude, with a few lessons.

1. Learn humility, from a consciousness of daily sin: this is the lesson God himself intended that we should learn. “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, God is faith-

ful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John i. 8, 9.)

2. Learn to pity and to pray for those who talk of perfection in this life. One thing is evident: they know very little of themselves—very little of the law of God—very little of the gospel of God, or they could not talk of perfection. An eminent divine has said, "There is more corruption than grace in the heart of the most eminent saint under heaven," I do believe it. May God of his infinite goodness and mercy arm us with himself, against ourselves: and remember, as a ground of encouragement, that a little grace, inspired by God, is stronger than strong corruption.

3. Learn to bless God for daily mercy in Christ. Let daily forgiveness be the source of daily praise. God is not weary of forgiving; let us not be weary of praising. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." (1 John ii. 1, 2.)

4. Learn to pray for a merciful disposition. May this be our ceaseless prayer. It is not enough that we should pray for the establishment of principle in the heart; but, for the development of that principle in the life.

5. Lastly, learn to pray daily for an increase of faith. We have an interesting example left us

on record : our Lord says to his disciples, “ Take heed to yourselves : if thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him ; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent, thou shalt forgive him. And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith.” (Luke xvii. 3—5.) O wise disciples ! Sometimes, indeed, they were foolish ; but on this occasion they were wise. They felt the weight of what their Lord and master told them, and immediately prayed, “ Lord, increase our faith,” that we may honour thy command by obedience.



## SERMON IX.

## ON THE LORD'S PRAYER.

MATT. vi. 13.

*And lead us not into temptation, but deliver  
us from evil.*

THE connexion between one part and another of this prayer, is singularly striking : one thing necessarily and sweetly flows from another. The prayer immediately preceding my text is this, “Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors ;” and then connected with it, as if all the attributes of Deity are to be displayed in all their glory, the text is introduced.

The mercy of God was intended to deliver man from sin in the most comprehensive manner. If it did not effect this, it could not possibly be mercy : if it did not accomplish this effectually and eternally, it would not be mercy, but cruelty. “Forgive us our debts,” justify us from

every charge ; and this, of course, must involve in it, dispose us to love and worship thee. We are forgiven, and we are justified ; we are changed from being the voluntary slaves of sin and Satan, into the sons and daughters of the living God.

Need I give you the history of the poor cripple at the waters of Siloam, who, after having been healed by an almighty Physician, was thus addressed by him : “ Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.” (John v. 14.) If we avoid sin, we effectually avoid every thing that is evil ; if we expose ourselves to sin, we expose ourselves to all that is evil : to many evils and dangers in time, and to more in eternity.

“ *Lead us not into temptation.*” Lead us not by thy providence into temptation : and suffer us not to be led into temptation by any enemy.

Temptations may be considered as coming either from God or from the arch-enemy of God and man. The temptations of God strictly involve in them no more than a trial of principle ; the temptations of Satan involve in them the infusion of moral evil into the mind ; *this* is the difference. I would then consider,

I. TEMPTATION AS COMING FROM GOD. The Lord tries or proves his family ;

1. By various dispensations. •

It was thus the Israelites were tempted ; I

mean, they were proved by the Almighty, by a variety of his dispensations. The Lord says, "Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee and to prove thee; to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldst keep his commandments or no." (Deut. viii. 2.) In their history we read our own. If you wish to form an accurate idea of the rebellion of the Israelites in the wilderness, read your own hearts with profound attention, and there you will find it all.

2. By his mercies. He does so at the present time. Consider the multitude of mercies, of temporal mercies, which he confers upon them; I defy any finite mind to number them. But remember, you will have to answer at the day of judgment for them; you will be answerable to God for using or abusing any, or all of his mercies. He rained manna from heaven on the Israelites; but what did he receive in return? Love and gratitude? By no means; enmity and rebellion against him pervade their conduct. And may we not apply this to ourselves, when we consider all that God has done for us in a temporal, as well as in a spiritual point of view? And what has he received at our hands? When we take a retrospective view of the whole tenor of our lives, we find more hatred than love; more ingratitude than gratitude. If we had treated

any of our fellow-creatures as we have treated God, we should have been spurned from them, and driven as ungrateful wretches from their doors; but, thanks be to God! he has not yet spurned us from him; and we bless his holy name for the means he has devised for conferring on us everlasting salvation.

3. By his judgments. He proves his family by affliction: and very often the afflictions with which men are individually visited, are the offspring of their own sins and iniquities. This does not tend in the least degree to alleviate, but rather to aggravate the evils with which they are visited. The Israelites were commanded to destroy the Canaanites: they, however, suffered some of them to live; and those whom they spared became the instruments of chastising them again and again. And, let me ask, what have we as a nation done? We have cherished the serpent Popery, and it is at the present moment endeavouring to sting our vitals. Tell me not that I meddle with politics, my brethren; let me tell you that the constitution of Britain was once a theocracy; and when our rulers and governors, yielding to carnal policy, have removed it from us, it is our duty, not indeed to speak bitterly against them, but to pray for them, as well as for our country. He who is aware of the evil of his own heart, and its legitimate desert, will feel intensely for the welfare of

mankind at large, and more particularly for those with whom he is immediately connected. Pray for your country, and pray for the rulers of your country ; and give me leave to tell you, that you cannot pray aright for yourselves unless you do so.

4. By false teachers. He suffers false teachers sometimes to insinuate themselves into his church, as a test of principle. The Lord tells the Israelites of what they would be exposed to from false teachers ; but he gave them an infallible rule, he gave them his own revealed will ; and he charges them not to listen to any one who would lead them astray from these truths. “The Lord your God proveth you to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.” (Deut. xiii. 3.)

5. By suspending the influence of his Holy Spirit. Now do not mistake me ; some would draw from this an erroneous inference, and suppose, that in consequence of it, man necessarily falls into sin. But no : no being ever did, or ever will *necessarily* fall into sin. Consider for a moment ; and then you will come to this safe conclusion. The devil himself is not under the *necessity* of sinning ; he never was, and never will be. If he were under a necessity of sinning, he could not be a moral and accountable agent. The influences of the Divine Spirit are not in the least degree necessary to render us account-

able beings. The gift of the Holy Ghost is a sovereign gift, not a gift of equity. But what do we experience when the divine influences are suspended? Man rushes headlong into sin. Witness the conduct of Hezekiah. One would have imagined that he would have dwelt on the goodness and greatness of God, when a foreign prince had sent his ambassador to him. But no; he consulted his vanity, and that prompted him to exhibit himself. Think not lightly of this: Hezekiah was, indeed, on the whole, an excellent man; but when the Divine influence was withdrawn from him, we see him evincing the spirit which the devil himself evinced, when he first revolted against God, and which he will continue to evince throughout eternity.—God left him to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart. (2 Chron. xxxii. 31.)

6. By separating them from every thing that is dear to them. He seems, sometimes, to cut asunder all the tender and delicate strings of the human heart. Witness the command given to Abraham to offer up his son Isaac: principle was tried here, and principle triumphed gloriously. While we see our own weakness in the absence of God, we should at the same time learn to read our own strength in his presence. No duty, however difficult, when God himself is present, will ever be dreaded by his children; but it will be embraced with alacrity and plea-

sure, as the will of their Father who is in heaven.

7. By persecutions. We do not know much of persecution in this country ; but there are those who feel the effects of it, even in the day in which we live ; some who are living solitary, like the sparrow alone upon the house-top. Look at such an individual, perhaps a weak female, in the midst of a family who are all the enemies of the living God ; she is the object of their cruel scorn from day to day. Oh ! it requires the spirit of a martyr to bear this, and the God of martyrs to inspire that spirit every moment. “ Fear none of those things which ye shall suffer : be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.” (Rev. ii. 10.)

## II. TEMPTATION, AS COMING FROM SATAN.

Here we must take into consideration the infusion of moral or spiritual evil. But do not mistake me : Satan cannot force the will ; that is impossible. No being can force the will. But Satan does *this* ; he first of all lays hold of the imagination, and presents to men, what shall I say ? he presents the almost boundless fields of fancy ; with ten thousand pictures of every thing that has a tendency to lead the heart astray from God. Satan first enters the imagination ; from the imagination he travels to the heart, the affections, and all the corrupt propensities of human



nature. Oh ! my young friends, especially examine every thing that enters the imagination : do not play with any thing there ; see that truth alone inhabits it. The most vivid imagination, the most refined sensibilities, are perfectly consistent with hardness of heart. Witness Lord Byron. Satan took possession of his imagination, and filled it with unholy images ; these afterwards travelled into his heart, and from his corrupt heart has issued a flood of practical iniquity which is deluging the land at the present moment. All his exquisite poetry ought not to induce any of you to read his works.

Satan's instruments to seduce into sin are, 1, Wealth. Satan tempted David to number his people ; he presented his imagination with a wealthy and a populous kingdom. 'Number those men, and dwell with delight on thine own greatness.' (1 Chron. xxi.) David fell into the snare, and numbered the people. It is recorded in the New Testament that Satan entered into the heart of Judas. Satan presented him with the idea of wealth in his imagination, and from thence it travelled into his heart. 'Enrich thyself by sacrificing thy Master to the will of the people.' (John xiii. 2.) Judas fell into the snare. These examples are perfectly applicable, because there is a similarity in all Satan's temptations, whether as presented to the enemies, or to the friends of God. He takes possession not only of

one, but every evil propensity, and the will of man consents; *the fool*, as he is emphatically called in the language of Scripture, falls wilfully and delightfully into the snares of the tempter. "Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then, when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." (James i. 14, 15.)

2. Ambition. Satan fires the hearts of men, by taking possession of their imagination: he showed to Buonaparte the glory of many kingdoms: he presented him with the most delightful pictures; with the idea of making himself, not only the monarch, but the god of the earth. He fell into the snare; and what were the sins he committed under the influence of ambition! The tempter presented our Saviour with the kingdoms of this world and their glory, but he found nothing in *him*; there was no inclination to meet it. The Saviour, doubtless, had a fine imagination. No one ever possessed what can be compared with it. He perused every thing with the eye, and appreciated every thing with the spirit of one who is God; and he rejected every evil. And here I would make one observation: no evil could travel farther than the imagination in the person of the Saviour; so far and no farther; it could not enter in the least degree into his heart and affections: *there* good and evil

were properly beheld ; the former loved, prized, and welcomed ; the latter invariably hated and rejected.

3. Indolence and idleness. Satan lays hold of the indolence and sloth of men, to lead them into snares. My brethren, have always something to do. Be always engaged. God never intended that a single idler should exist upon the earth ; but that all, high and low, rich and poor, old and young, should be profitably employed. Even Adam, in a state of innocence in Paradise, was not to be idle, but to be engaged in tilling the ground. An idler is called, in the old English proverb, the devil's playfellow : a proverb more just and important never flowed from the pen of man. David was an idler when he saw Bathsheba ; if he had been lawfully engaged, he would not have fallen into the snare. The devil produced his internal and his external instruments for his overthrow, and triumphed. O what a contrast is there between Uriah and David ! Had not the Scriptures told me that David was the man after God's own heart, I could scarcely have believed it. Look at Uriah, honest, pious, brave, loyal ; forgetting all the sweet endearments of home, and devoting himself to his master David. Now view David sending this man, in the midst of all his loyalty, into the mouth of danger, and commanding him to be set in the front of the battle that he might be slain. O my brethren,

as I have told you before, if you wish to have peace of conscience, follow the example of Christ. Shun sin as you would avoid a hungry lion.

4. Evil company. Jehoshaphat associated with Ahab ; and after imbibing a considerable portion of his spirit, although the prophet had prohibited him from going to battle, he went with Ahab to Ramoth Gilead to fight, contrary to the command of God. You cannot possibly be long with evil companions without imbibing something of their spirit. A man who possesses what I may be allowed to call a spiritual taste, could not stay one moment, without feeling contaminated. Have no unnecessary intercourse with those who are not the friends of God. They will respect you for it, and respect your principles. They see such things with the eye of an eagle ; and whatever their tongues may say of you, their hearts and their bosoms will be compelled to respect you. Joseph fell into bad company in the court of Pharaoh, and he learned to swear. He knew he was not allowed to swear but on solemn occasions, and then only by the name of God ; yet he swore “by the life of Pharaoh.” Peter went into bad company when he denied his Master ; and from one sin he went on to another : first of all denying him, and then cursing and swearing that he knew him not. You had better be inoculated with the plague than have any thing to do with sin or sinners, in any shape whatever.

5. Various tastes and propensities. Satan adapts his temptations to every state, to the wise and the unwise, the learned and the ignorant, the bond and the free. Consider all the various shades of human condition, and human character, and Satan has a snare adapted to them all. "We are not ignorant of Satan's devices." (2 Cor. ii. 11.) Brethren, let me again remind you that his first entrance is into the imagination, and here he is to be withstood. Here Messiah himself withstood him, and triumphed over him.

III. I come now, in the third place, to consider THE REASONS WHY WE SHOULD PRAY, "LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION;" or rather, some further reasons than those I have already adduced.

1. That we may learn patience in the midst of temptations, if God, in his providence, lead us into them, or if Satan expose us to them. While we oppose them, and triumph over them in the strength of our Lord, they teach us patience. And remember again, that if we are truly wise in the wisdom of Jehovah, all the machinations of Satan, and all his attempts to ensnare us, will, eventually and for ever, issue in our final triumph and bliss.

2. That we may be taught the deepest humility; a consciousness of our own absolute weakness, and inability to withstand any temptation. In reading the history of the saints of God, we can-

not but admire the fortitude and the firmness with which, in the spirit of true religion, they met the severest trials; and yet, in further perusing their history, we find the very same individuals yielding to the slightest temptations. The least enemy is stronger than we are in ourselves: while we are stronger than the strongest in the strength of the Lord our God.

3. That in the midst of trials and temptations, we should pray for purity. Job was well aware of this, though as severely tried, perhaps, as any of his fellow creatures ever were. He says, "When he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." (Job xxiii. 10.) Every thing he had was swept away by his arch enemy, Satan, and his friends assailed him with cruel and false charges; yet Job evidently triumphed in the midst of all his trials. I need not now give you the proof afforded by the sequel of his interesting history, to show that he did triumph.

4. That we should pray in the midst of trials and temptations, that the strength of God may be made perfect in our weakness. It is the province of *faith* to wield, in one important sense, all the attributes of Jehovah; and only when doing so, can the believer anticipate a triumph over all his enemies. The apostle Paul was made deeply conscious of his own weakness, for he had a thorn in the flesh: what that was, I do not pretend to determine; nor do I know that it would be of any



benefit to you if I could ; but of one thing I am certain, that if it had been necessary for us to know it, it would have been revealed : however, there was something in it that was a temptation to sin ; something which involved a severe exercise of feeling, with a tendency to rebel against God ; but he prayed, and the answer was most satisfactory ; “ My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness.” (2 Cor. xii. 9.) We first of all triumph over ourselves, at a throne of grace ; that triumph involves in it a triumph over God, like that of Jacob. Having triumphed there, we are destined to triumph in every other place. The first triumph of the believer is in the closet ; and whatever appears to man, is only the effect flowing from that cause. An individual may be considered very rich ; and may have the reputation of possessing boundless wealth ; but if you were suffered to go into his counting-house, you should soon be able to tell whether he were so or not. Enter into your counting-houses, enter into your closets ; how do you appear there ? Do you lay siege to the throne of grace, and tell the Lord that you *must* have divine grace, or that if you do not, you must fall ? No one but God knows to what you are exposed. O pray, pray to God ; enrich yourselves in your closets, and you will be rich every where else.

5. The wicked are said to be led by the Lord



into temptation. This truth only involves their abuse of the *gifts* of God. They wish to have the good things of God's providence : God gives them ; and they abuse them all without one single exception. All the gifts of God are good in themselves ; they are only the innocent occasion of evil as they are abused by man. Or perhaps, to give a more scriptural account of it, God leaves them to their own ways. He lets them have their own heart's desire ; and nothing more is necessary to make men the slaves of sin here, and the victims of hell hereafter.

IV. WE ARE TAUGHT TO PRAY, "LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION, BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL," OR THE EVIL ONE, for the following reasons.

1. Because sin is enmity against God ; it is enmity in the abstract ; it is nothing but enmity. What is involved in it, no one but God can fully know. No one but Messiah knows the evil of sin. He does, because he suffered all its tremendous consequences.

2. Because sin, as being enmity against God, robs man of every good, and visits him with every evil. Sin visits him with a multitude of evils, even in this life. If you were to examine the votaries of pleasure, you would soon come to this conclusion ; for many of them anticipate the awful doom that awaits them ; and if they harden themselves to such a degree as to be insensible to

this, it only proves that their case is still worse : “The way of transgressors is hard.” The reason why there is so much evil in the world, is, that there is so much sin. Some people, travelling back to Eden, have said, ‘This is the effect of the fall ;’ but there is nothing in Adam’s transgression to oblige any man to sin. Let us beware of a system of necessity, which involves in it the fatalism of the Koran of Mohammed—not the predestination of the word of God. To what are the calamities of the country to be attributed ? To the sins of individuals. If we could make the drunkard sober ; the thief honest ; the liar to speak truth, Britain would be a heaven compared with what it now is. The misery existing in the world, flows from the sins of individuals who are now living. God will one day remove moral evil ; and then a thousand blessings of his providence will reach men, which cannot possibly visit them at the present moment. There is much suffering in consequence of moral evil ; if we could remove the one, the other would, in a great measure, cease to exist.

3. Because sin aims at the destruction of all the creatures of God, by aiming first of all at the destruction of God himself.

4. Because sin is the greatest of all evils : it is the parent of every other evil. And now, let me ask you, my brethren, whence, and from whom, could this prayer come, but from the heart of one who is God ?

To conclude,

1. Learn the hypocrisy of those who pray, and yet at the same time do not watch against the incursions of sin : he who prays as he ought to pray, opposes sin at the same time : " Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." (Matt. xxvi. 41.)

2. Learn to avoid every thing which has the remotest tendency to lead into sin ; and do not listen to those thoughtless professors of religion, who would call these things legality. Notwithstanding all their profession of religion, I do not hesitate to call them the ministers of sin and Satan. Solomon gives very valuable advice, when he says, addressing the young man, " Remove thy way far from her ; come not nigh unto the door of her house." (Prov. v. 8.) He is here advising the young man to avoid the snare of the harlot ; and he says, " Remove thy way *far* from her ;" live at the antipodes ; do not approach the door of her house : and this advice is truly excellent with respect to every evil, and every enemy.

3. Seek the light and influence of the divine Spirit continually ; and remember, too, that the *light* of the divine Spirit is not enough. His *power* is absolutely necessary to influence the heart. There may be a great deal of light in the intellect, where the heart is not under the influence of divine grace. Invoke, then, the power as well as the light, of the divine Spirit ; that truth may take possession of the whole man.

4. Lastly, present all your petitions to God, in the intercession of Jesus Christ. ‘My prayer is very unworthy.’ Prayer supposes unworthiness. If we had no imperfection within us, our lives would be ceaseless praise. ‘I feel sin strong within me.’ Prayer supposes the existence of innumerable enemies ; but in whom is our strength ? From whom is our triumph ? Is it not our covenant Head and Representative, Christ Jesus the Lord, who presents all the prayers of his family before the throne of God, and imparts to them daily and constantly that measure of strength which is necessary to enable them to triumph. He says, “As thy days, so shall thy strength be,” and, “Underneath are the everlasting arms.” (Deut. xxxiii. 25, 27.) Pray without ceasing ; and remember, that you have an Advocate on high. Let me remind you of this truth : in the midst of all your imperfections, while you have a grain of spiritual honesty, your prayers are more acceptable to God, in the intercession of Jesus Christ, than the triumphant strains of angels.

## SERMON X.

## ON THE LORD'S PRAYER.

MATT. vi. 13.

*For thine is the kingdom, and the power,  
and the glory.*

THE conclusion of this prayer, like every other part of it, presents us with all the credentials of heaven: "Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory." Man does not possess honesty enough to ascribe the glory to God, till not only taught, but also enabled to do so by God himself. The more I consider this prayer, the more am I lost in its glory. It has matter enough in it to preach on every sabbath, even were my life prolonged to the age of Methuselah. Every word proves clearly that it emanates from the bosom of him who is supreme. It does more; every petition in this prayer proves that it emanates from the bosom of one who is man as well as God.

If I begin this interesting prayer, and say, "Our Father," I behold Messiah himself taking his family by the hand, and saying, "I will lead you into the presence of my God and your God, of my Father and your Father ; be not afraid."

As intercessor between God and man, we find in him all the glory of Deity, as well as all the exquisite feelings of humanity. He leads his family to the Lord of hosts, as an object of worship, himself a worshipper : and now mark the conclusion : "Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory." Behold him here, the first of worshippers, as well as an object of worship ; the first of subjects, and the first of kings, as I have told you before. Who that does justice to this interesting truth would ever sit down in despondency, much less in despair ; admitting even that the aggregate sins of the human race (great as they are) were upon his head ? It is not the multitude of transgressions that will consign any to hell : nothing less than the rejection of the infinitely glorious remedy, a remedy provided by God himself, will do this. And, my brethren, it will seal the condemnation with all the vengeance of everlasting fire. Forbid it, O Lord God Almighty, and suffer no one who is here to fall into eternal destruction.

I. In this ascription of glory to the Father, there is,—

1. Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Illustrating one scripture by another : "Through him, we both (Jew and Gentile) have access by one Spirit unto the Father." (Eph. ii. 18.) The apostle Paul, in teaching the Hebrews, thus addresses them : "Having an High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith." (Heb. x. 21, 22.)

Consider, as an example, the Saviour's faith ; which is recorded as an example, and consequently as an encouragement to us in the midst of every difficulty. No one among all his brethren ever exercised faith as he did. He was the only one whose faith never failed him, even in the least degree.

2. Hope ; that hope which anticipates the eternal possession, and enjoyment of the exceeding great and precious promises of God ; "In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie promised before the world began." (Tit. i. 2.)

The Saviour himself is here again an eminent example ; and the apostle presents him as such to the attention of all believers. "Wherefore," says he, "seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses," (saints and angels beholding us with the most intense interest and delight every moment,) "let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us ; looking unto Jesus the author and



finisher of our faith ; who," (now here is his hope,) " for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Heb. xii. 1, 2.) "Thine is the kingdom!"

3. The gratitude of his believing family : " Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead ; to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." (1 Peter i. 3—5.) It involves in it the praises of God ascending from the bosom of faith and hope, to the ears of the Almighty as a sacrifice most acceptable to him. Let nothing rob you of this truth : God is delighted with the service of his family, especially with their praises, notwithstanding the many imperfections which inhabit their bosoms. "Thine is the power!"

4. Praise. The apostle connects praise and prayer together : " By prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God." (Phil. iv. 6.) We find praises blended with prayer in scripture ; and prayer is never perfect till matured into praise. Many individuals are disposed to ask this question : 'How am I to know that my prayers are heard

and answered by the Almighty?' Some satisfactory answers might be given; I shall only point out one at present. Are you enabled to praise God? If so, you may be as certain as you are of your own existence, that your prayers are heard and answered.

Praise on earth is as sure an evidence that prayer is heard and answered, as praise in heaven is. My dear brethren, do you know what it is to praise God? If not, you do not know what the sweetness of true religion is. It is in praise that we are made like the Almighty. He is ever engaged in contemplating his own glories with the most intense delight; and thus in praise we most resemble him. The individual who praises God will not have to travel very far for evidence of adoption into his family. He will enter into the recesses of his own bosom; there he will meet the aggregate forces of earth and hell; and there defeat them. O may we know what it is to praise God!

The concluding part of this prayer affords to us the most copious matter of praise; it involves Deity in all the glory of his perfections. *Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever.*

1. First, then, praise God for what he is in himself. Praise must begin here. This may appear strange to some, and an impossibility to others; but the solution is easy.

Consider—God is not only the most necessary of all beings, but, properly speaking, necessity can be predicated of none but God. He exists of necessity. It is equally true that the freedom of God is infinitely greater than that of any other being. We find freedom and necessity involved in each other, in the most glorious manner in Jehovah. If we contemplate his essence, he exists necessarily; because he exists from eternity. His existence no more depends on his will, than yours or mine. Consider him then as necessarily existent; ever delighting in himself; ever engaged in willing that which is holy, just, and good; ever engaged in willing the highest good to the most degraded, most unworthy of all beings, the human family; and is he not worthy of being praised for what he is in himself? It is from what he is in himself, that all the blessings of the covenant of grace proceed; it is from what he is in himself that his covenant emanates; and from his covenant all the rich blessings of salvation continue to flow incessantly from heaven to earth. O praise him for ever!

I have said that praise is the perfection of prayer. Read the concluding Psalms; they are all praises, as the others are, for the most part, prayers; it is as if the Psalmist had said, I have prayed till I can pray no longer, I have been so richly answered; God himself is descending into my bosom every moment, I will

praise him myself, and call upon every one else to do so too ; I will not suffer any being in the universe to be silent : sun, moon, and stars, earth, dragons, and all deeps ; fire and hail, snow and vapour ; stormy winds ; mountains and hills, trees, beasts, and all cattle ; creeping things and flying fowl ; kings and people, princes and judges, young and old, they shall all join me in the praises of God. Nor is this to be considered only as the imagery of the poet's mind ; sublime and beautiful in the extreme it is, we acknowledge, but there is more than this in it. All the creatures of God are his ministers ; they are ministers to his church ; they become the occasion of praise to the believer. He reads in them the perfections of his heavenly Father, and especially his love to fallen man. " O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good ; for his mercy endureth for ever : to him that made great lights, for his mercy endureth for ever ; the sun to rule by day, for his mercy endureth for ever ; the moon and stars to rule by night, for his mercy endureth for ever." (Ps. cxxxvi. 1—7, 8, 9.)

The Lord has written mercy on every thing, that we may live in ceaseless communion with him ; in the daily enjoyment of our blessings, and of all the rich privileges he has given us.

2. God is to be praised because he is the universal monarch as well as the parent of all beings. " The Lord reigneth ; let the earth re-

joyce, let the multitude of isles be glad thereof.  
(Ps. xcvii. 1.)

“Thine is the kingdom.” He is enthroned in grace ; he is enthroned in glory ; he is enthroned in providence. O the awful effects of sin ! were it not for sin we should be incessantly praising God. If our hearts were as they ought to be with God, his praises would be involved in our salutation when we meet, and when we leave each other. May God have mercy upon us ; and let us never cease aiming at perfection ; however short we may fall of it now, we shall attain it eventually. It is the privilege of the believer to derive valuable lessons from all his imperfections, and all his lapses. I remember when at school, reading of a celebrated giant, who derived new strength from every fall ; so should we. The believer often says, “I have fallen.” Have you then taken your own dimensions in your fall ? Have you been deeply humbled before God ; and has your unworthiness endeared to you the God of your salvation ? We know that skilful artists derive good from every error they commit ; they gain instruction from every mistake. This is true wisdom ; may we learn to do the same.

3. God is to be praised for his omnipotence : “Thine is the power.” We have in the economy of salvation, and the things connected with it, all the will, and all the power of God. We cannot have more than this, and we cannot do with less.

His will appears more glorious in the redemption and salvation of fallen man than in any thing else; but it is indispensably connected with his power. Whatever God wills, his power *must* execute. His power may very properly be called the minister of his will. Before his power, what difficulties, what obstacles, what enemies, can stand? Not one; they must all eventually fall. His will and power are engaged to bless and crown his family with every good; to deliver them from every evil, and rescue them from the fangs of every foe. (1 Pet. i. 3, 5.) We find his power in every thing. I move my finger in his power at the present moment. I cannot explain it to you, nor can any one explain it. A skilful anatomist might tell me many things of which I am ignorant; but still he could ascend no higher than second causes. It is very well known that every new discovery in science involves in it a discovery of human ignorance. O that scientific men would think of this! I do not quarrel with science, I quarrel only with the abuse of it; with its idolatry. The man who is imbued with the spirit of true religion will derive rich instruction from science.

4. God is to be praised for his glory.

“Thine is the glory.” The glory of God may be considered in a two-fold point of view; his *essential* glory, and his *manifested* glory. (Psalm xix. 1.)



His essential glory involves in it every excellence, every good. Glory, in the Hebrew language, means what is weighty. What is so weighty as Deity? It means *substance*: “The wise shall inherit *substance*:” (Prov. viii. 21 :) this is the word.

When we think and speak of Deity, all comparisons fail. Contrasts present themselves continually. The aggregate value of all finite being, when contrasted with Deity, would be infinitely less than a drop of water when compared with the ocean; or than a particle of light with the body of the sun. Yet though it is impossible to fathom the perfections of God, we may know a great deal of them. There is no being so difficult, there is no being so easy to study as God. His moral and spiritual perfections may be investigated with the utmost ease. The peasant enters into them with as much ease, if not more, than one who is possessed of the genius of Newton.

But the glory of God, as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ; his mercy, his truth, his faithfulness, his promises, his precepts; *these* are the things that God intended us to study, and in these we are to delight. “Now unto God and our Father be glory, for ever and ever.” (Phil. iv. 20.)

5. Eternity is destined to be filled with, and occupied in his praise. “This God is our God for ever and ever.” (Ps. xlviii. 14.) In heaven



above, saints and angels are ceaselessly engaged in worshipping God : Messiah himself, in his humanity, taking the lead in the worship ; and entering, fully entering into the delightful service. God is ever engaged (as I have before observed) in contemplating his own perfections ; Messiah and his family are following him, and they will continue to follow him, for ever and ever.

I do not know how I can better conclude this sermon, than by recapitulating the whole of the Lord's Prayer.

First. "*Our Father*," the most endearing of all relationships ; destined to swallow up every other. All relationships here below, under the blessing of God, and in the economy of divine mercy, are intended to lose themselves in this for ever. It involves in it the highest reverence, as well as the strongest love. It connects the intercession of Jesus Christ, and the prayers of all his saints.—"*Our Father which art in heaven*." I am never afraid of approaching a throne of grace, however unworthy I am : Jesus is there : I am sensible it must be a snare of the devil that would drive me away. If guilt assail me, this is the reason why I should approach to be forgiven. If a remembrance of past unworthiness oppress me ; if Satan were to present me with a muster roll of all my past sins ; these are only so many reasons why I should *approach* my heavenly Father, before whose throne my elder brother is con-

tinually pleading my cause : nay, I should rather make use of the temptation of Satan as an encouragement to go to a throne of grace : I should say to the tempter, ‘ As I have *such* a God as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and *such* an elder brother who is ceaselessly engaged in interceding for me ; I am determined to persevere, and in his strength triumph over you.’ Thus then answer the devil. “ Resist him, and he will flee from you,” saith the page of inspiration.

2. “ *Hallowed be thy name.*” We are taught in these words this lesson, that every thing of God, and every thing connected with God, ought to be treated with the highest reverence.

Parents, my dear brethren and sisters in the Lord, watch over your children. Never suffer them to take the name of God in vain ; and forgive me for telling you of what I myself experienced, in consequence of the prayers and pains of a pious mother, who has long since been in heaven. When I was placed in the midst of boys at school, who were practising almost every wickedness, I could not join them. I speak this to the glory of my God, not in praise of myself. I could not take the name of God in vain ; I could not utter oaths and lies as others did ; in consequence of the exertions of a pious mother, blessed to me by the Lord.

3. “ *Thy kingdom come.*” May he reign

in every human heart ; and reign he will, no doubt,

“ From east to west,  
From India to the Pole.”

We have the promise, “ The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.” (Habbak. ii. 14.) Messiah will reign universally ; he will subdue to himself the family of Adam at last ; and I have no doubt that he has begun the work, and that we are living in the dawn of the millennial day. But before the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with universal healing in his wings, the nations of the earth will, I suppose, be visited with severe chastisement ; this chastisement, however, will involve a blessing of the highest order ; it will cast from the earth all sin and error in principle and in practice. Socinians will not live then. Papists must throw away all their idols to the moles and to the bats. The presence of divine truth will annihilate error, and will penetrate the inmost recesses of the human heart. Divine truth will change and purify the fountain ; and its hallowed streams will then richly flow into the life of the believer. “ Thy kingdom come :” this involves two things not only our ceaseless prayers, but our ceaseless exertions to promote the glory of God, by doing good to the souls of men. And we all can do more than

we are aware of. We do not know what we can do until we try.

I cannot help thinking of the little captive girl : I am disposed to think that she preached Jesus to Naaman the Syrian. “ Would God,” she said, “ my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria, for he would recover him of his leprosy.” (2 Kings v. 3.) The Syrian was wise enough to listen to this little captive maid ; and he travelled to the land of Israel, where he became acquainted with the God of Israel. Many would have said to her, ‘ Be silent ; will a great man listen to you ?’ Her conduct says, ‘ I will not be silent ; I have something to say for God.’ I pray that God may bless you abundantly, all you are and all you have, that it may richly flow into the service of God, and that you may teach men to love and adore your heavenly Father. Above all, in your families exhibit the image of the living God perpetually. Parents, fathers and mothers, let your children see the image of God in the whole of your deportment. Masters and mistresses, show to your servants the image of the living God. If they are wicked in consequence of seeing you wicked, how can you have the face to reprove them ? O, exhibit the image of Deity to the whole of your family ; and then, when any of them do wrong, the reproof will descend, originally, from God himself ; and you will be only the channel of communication. And

do not imagine that I am flattering you, when I tell you it will derive a rich tincture from your own feelings : human feelings are necessary to meet human feelings, and this is what we find in Messiah ; God in all his glory, and human feelings in all their perfection. Imitate him, then, and they will love you for your reproof.

4. “ *Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.*” In addition to prayer, this involves in it a ceaseless endeavour to sacrifice our own corrupt will to the will of God ; and to say as the Saviour did, “ Not my will, but thine be done.” (Luke xxii. 42.) In all things study the will of God. There may be cases in which the believer will be perplexed ; yet when the desire is honest, he perseveres in waiting on his God ; and he certainly will learn his heavenly Father’s will. If the vision tarry, wait for it ; (Habbak. ii. 3 ;) if it be night with your soul, yet persevere in prayer ; the dawn is fast approaching.

5. “ *Give us this day our daily bread.*” Here we should learn that we cannot eat the bread, and drink the water, which are necessary for the support of our frail bodies, as we ought to do, without eating and drinking that bread and water which are absolutely necessary to keep the *soul* alive. Oh ! how awful is the state of those who are described by the apostle as eating and drinking their own damnation, in coming to the Lord’s table ; (1 Cor. xi. 29 ;) and they are

eating and drinking their own damnation in every thing, until they believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is dreadful in the extreme to remark, that though the richest blessings come from God continually, as all his creatures do, yet they are in effect changed into curses by the unbeliever.

“ *Give us this day our daily bread.*” And why? Because Christ himself has purchased it for us. He has purchased our temporal as well as our spiritual food; and it is in the economy of divine government, that we are never to eat the former as we ought to eat it, but in eating the latter. May God teach us to do so!

6. “ *And forgive us our debts.*” God delights in mercy, his child delights in mercy too. Show me an individual who delights in mercy, and I will show you a saint; I will point out one who is destined to triumph over all his enemies. But the believer is blessed with a disposition to delight in mercy, in a two-fold point of view. He delights in receiving mercy at the hands of God; and he delights in bestowing mercy on others. Mercy is the only element in which the soul is destined to live, and sin is destined to die; and remember, sin must die, or the soul must die. God cannot annihilate sin, but in and by his mercy. I mention this to awaken those dreamers who talk of the mercy of God, while at the same time they live in the most thoughtless manner. Oh! live in the daily habit of receiving mercy at



the hands of God, and of bestowing mercy on all who have injured you. In the name of the living God, I adjure you not to cherish any soreness of feeling towards any individual : if you do so, you will suffer severely. If I wished to treat any one with the most refined severity, I should teach him to hate me ; and while he keeps that hatred alive, it must be as a vulture preying upon his soul ; it will torment him morning, noon, and night. Have mercy upon yourselves, then, by shewing mercy to others.

7. "*As we forgive our debtors.*" Mercy to others involves in it, not only a forgiveness of injury, but a delight in doing them every possible good. Every injury must be washed away from our memory, as the tide washes away every impression from the sand. In receiving injuries, we should be sand ; but in receiving benefits, we should be rocks yielding to the chisel, and retaining an impression destined to live for ever.

8. "*Lead us not into temptation.*" This involves wisdom and circumspection, as well as prayer. "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." (Matt. xxvi. 41.) Watch and pray : our enemies are very vigilant ; they know no rest ; they never close their eyes ; they are circumventing us every moment. Let us learn a lesson from them ; and it is wisdom to be taught by them : let us learn vigilance from them.

9. "*But deliver us from evil.*" This teaches



us that none but God can deliver us. We cannot deliver ourselves from the least, from the weakest, of our enemies ; but God can deliver us from the greatest : and for the encouragement of some weak individuals, I would say, God not only can deliver, but he *has* delivered some of his family, after they have run themselves wilfully into the toils and meshes of Satan. Yes, he can deliver, and he does deliver, even in those cases which appear desperate and extreme. His deliverance admits of no exception. His is not a general rule, it is universal.

10. “ *For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory.*” And thus a life of faith involves in it a life of ceaseless prayer, a life of ceaseless praise to God. We are now in a state of discipline, of preparation for heaven. The Holy Spirit is making us “ meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light ;” (Col. i. 12 ;) but how does he effect it ? He first of all introduces principle into the human heart, to counteract and undermine principle : this ripens into habit, and then flows into the life, to correct every thing wrong in it. Oh, cultivate principles ; cultivate them in yourselves, and in your family, and in your servants. Cultivate them in all with whom you are connected. My brethren, be ambitious of making yourselves, and every individual in your families, temples of the living God ! Try what you can do. Lay siege to a throne of grace ; imitate the conduct of men of the world, when

under some reigning passion : when they have any particular object in view, they say, "I will try ; I do not see any impossibility in my way ; there are difficulties, but I will endeavour to triumph over them." Imitate then the conduct of the children of this world, who are "wiser in their generation than the children of light." (Luke xvi. 8.) They that are for us are more than they that are against us. Our friends are more numerous than our foes. All the attributes of Deity are on our side ; all the saints and angels in heaven are with us ; all the prayers of God's family are with us, and are ascending to heaven continually. Try then any thing, and every thing, that is well pleasing to the Lord ; and as surely as you try, you shall succeed. Amen.

## SERMON XI.

### ON THE LORD'S PRAYER.

MATT. vi. 13.

*Amen.*

I HAVE never felt the excellencies and glories of this prayer so strongly as I do at the present moment. I see Messiah and his family in the whole of it, from first to last.

He intimates, in the commencement of it, that he will present our prayers in his own intercession before God: this is the reason why he says, "Our Father," which includes himself as well as his family. In the conclusion of the prayer, we find him again placing himself at the head of his family, as the first of worshippers in the ascription of praise to God: "Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory for ever." He is at this present moment engaged in praise, as well as in intercession.

The faculties of the Saviour's humanity are so wonderfully enlarged, that the aggregate sum

of human ability sinks into nothing when compared, or rather contrasted, with it. If some great man were to take up this subject, many valuable truths respecting it might yet be elicited from an attentive perusal of the Scriptures; always bearing in mind, that he is Messiah in our nature, God over all, blessed for ever. In this nature he has triumphed for us; and the provisions of the covenant of grace are so glorious, that our triumph is as fully and completely secured as his own. Do not shrink from this; nothing less could secure the salvation of any human being.

*Amen* involves in it the faithfulness and truth of God: and as an appendage to this prayer, it involves in it our conviction of the truth of God, our assurance of his holy truth. And now what shall I say of those who tremble in the presence of the God of heaven and earth, and teach others to tremble when they should be teaching them to rejoice?

*Amen* involves in it all the glory of the divine perfections, and the complete triumph of the believer. Divine things are true in themselves, they were true from eternity, they involve truth in them. Do not mistake me, and do not imagine that I am inaccurate; they involve the essence of truth, God himself, who was truth before time began. But though true in themselves, they are

not so to us until we receive them in the Amen of God ; they then become living truths within our own bosoms : God himself inhabits the bodies as well as the souls of his children ; their bodies as well as their souls are the temples of Jehovah ; the great Amen lives in his own truth in the human bosom, and he will inhabit it for ever and ever.

There is a peculiarity in all the Saviour's addresses ; he uses a language which none dare use but himself. His language is the language of God. No one begins his discourse as he does, with "Amen." It is another Greek word that the apostles use when they would convey the same idea, or something like it ; but Jesus Christ, especially in the gospel of St. John, uses the word according to the Hebrew idiom, "Amen and Amen." Now there is a reason for this, and the reason is most weighty, as well as most obvious ; nothing can be more cogent, nothing more interesting. It is a title of Messiah. He entitles himself, "the Amen," that is, the true God, the God of faithfulness. Compare two texts of Scripture on this subject. "Unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God." (Rev. iii. 14.) "He who blesseth himself in the earth, shall bless himself in the God of truth," *i. e.* in God Amen ! "And he that sweareth in the earth, shall swear

by the God of truth," *i. e.* by God Amen ! Who then is Jesus, who styles himself the Amen, but the God of truth ? He is the God who is the Amen, and as such, he is always opposed in Scripture to false gods ; gods whose very essence is falsehood, whose composition is nothing but lies. Jesus Christ, as Amen, is the very essence of revealed truth : and, bear this in mind, that truth has no independent existence ; truth exists only in God ; it cannot be separated from him.

" *Amen.*" I will fill this prayer and answer it, with myself. Pray then ; I will inspire the prayer ; it shall ascend to the Father's ears in my intercession. I will put myself into it ; and then descend myself in all the blessings that flow down from heaven to earth, to preserve and bless you for evermore. Jesus Christ is the unerring prophet ; Jesus Christ is the faithful and true witness ; Jesus Christ is the sworn, or, in other words, the adjured God. This is the import of Amen at the end of this prayer. All the promises of God are yea and amen in him ; (2 Cor. i. 20 ;) they are so fully involved in him, that they cannot be separated from him ; they comprise Deity in all its glory ; they could not be yea and amen in Jesus Christ, if this were not the case. All the promises involve in them the oath of God, the adjured Deity. All his truth is confirmed by his promise and oath, ratified by the death of Jesus, and sealed by his Holy Spirit.



When a Jew was formerly sworn, this was the import of the oath administered to him: "I swear, or I adjure thee, by the Lord God of Israel, or by the name of him who is mercy." The witness then who was about to give his testimony answered, "Amen," and thus was sworn; and this was swearing by the God of truth. I know not now what becomes of the Quakers' objection to taking an oath. Irreverent oaths are indeed denounced in Scripture; but there are times and seasons when the believer is justified in taking an oath, and in so doing he is led to consider it as an act of worship: this is what an oath is when properly understood. And can it be wrong, my brethren, to worship God? But in the light in which I am speaking of oaths now, in what a state is Britain! Oaths are multiplied perpetually; and men are taking them with as little thought, as if God would not vindicate his insulted law, and avenge the honour of his own name.

"*Amen.*" Thus the Saviour concludes: I am the sworn God; I am the adjured Deity: your prayers shall ascend to the Father's ears involved in my oath; his own oath will receive and fulfil them; and I, by my Holy Spirit, will indite them in your heart. "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one." (1 John v. 7.) You know that this text has been much contro-



verted; but the truth is completely scriptural; it is fully involved in the whole of revelation. We have precisely the same thing in many other texts of scripture: the truth contained in it not only pervades the whole of the revealed will of God, but is again and again expressly declared. Hear what the Amen says, in addressing himself to Nicodemus. He begins first of all, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee;" (John iii. 11;) in other words, Amen, amen, *I* say unto thee: now mark, "We speak that *we* do know, and testify that *we* have seen; and ye receive not *our* witness." Here is a change in *the person* from the singular to the plural, proving clearly that not *one* person alone in Jehovah gives us his oath, but the three. Compare this with the passage to which I have just adverted; "There are *three* that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost." I cannot give up that text, while I trust that God would give me courage to perish rather than sacrifice the truth that is contained in it: "There are *three* witnesses in heaven."

His essence, then, to repeat what I have told you before, (and his truth will bear frequent repetitions, without losing any part of its interest,) his essence pervades his truth, and that truth never can be insipid to those who have any spiritual taste. Are any tired of the sun? Are any tired of bread and water? We cannot exist

without them. The light of the sun never tires ; bread and water never become insipid ; because we stand in need of them every moment : and for the same reason, to those who are spiritually minded, the truth of God is never wearisome, never insipid. Are they tired of the Sun of Righteousness ? Are they weary of his rays ? O no ! they cannot live without them.

But now to consider some of the important uses of “ Amen,” at the conclusion of the Lord’s Prayer :—

1. To remind God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, of the oath by which the promises of God, by which the truths of God, are confirmed to believers. Men, when they enter into an engagement, and honestly intend the fulfilment of it, frequently say, if applied to afterwards, “ Do not interrupt me ; my mind is made up : you have my promise, no farther petition is necessary.” Not so with God. He delights to be reminded of his engagements, of his promise, of his oath : and remember his oath is full of himself. It is intended by God, that in every prayer that flows from our lips, we should remind him of his covenant oath : of his own oath sealed and ratified in his dear Son, for the fulfilment of all his promises. O what truths we have in divine revelation ! Our loss is incalculable, if we are not attentive to them. I have the oath of God, that all sin shall be forgiven for the sake

of Jesus ! I have the oath of God, that although my sins be as scarlet, they shall be as snow ! I have the oath of God, that though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool ! O pray then, my brethren ; let the oath of God ascend in your daily petitions ; and he will descend, in the fulfilment of his own oath, with all the blessings you need.

2. A second use is this, to strengthen our faith. It is a strong encouragement to go to a person, if we know him to be possessed of integrity, and of all the means necessary to fulfil his engagements. Sometimes we have a great deal of trouble to obtain an interview ; but at other times we hear it said, “ Do not be afraid of waiting on him ; he is a man of integrity and beneficence.” We have here the integrity and beneficence of God ; and the oath is given in compassion to our infirmity. The oath is, what shall I say ? the sword of the Almighty which he intends shall be buried in the vitals of unbelief. Hear what he says—“ That by two immutable things,” (the oath and the promise of God,) “ in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.” (Heb. vi. 18.) Can any thing have a more immediate tendency to strengthen the weak believer, than the oath of his heavenly Father ? the oath of his eldest brother ? and at the same

time, the oath of the divine Spirit, whose province it is to be the guide and comforter of his family during their pilgrimage here below?

3. It is of use, in the third place, to teach us to devote ourselves to the truth, to the love, and to the service of the Redeemer of mankind. I will tell you my own opinion on this subject; I have considered it, and I speak it not only with conviction, but with a consciousness of its accuracy. It is this: that when the believer, in the spirit of true devotion, beholds the glories of the religion of Jesus, when his heart imbibes its rich influences, he binds himself by an oath to serve his God. He says, "Thou hast given me thy oath, and thyself in that oath, O my God! and in 'Amen,' I give thee my oath in grateful return, and myself in that oath." This it is. Have you courage to do it, my brother? Do we consider well the import of it, when we do it? Happy the man, happy the woman, who knows the import of the word.

See what results from it: God and his children united together in all the bonds of eternity! Bound in the oath of God: bound by the mighty power of God himself.

There are promises of the Old Testament that "one shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Is-

rael." (Isa. xlv. 5.) Here is a confirmation of what I say. O my brethren ! fix your eyes on the glories of the region of bliss, and be not dismayed by any difficulties internal or external. God delights to triumph over them all. I do not know how the believer can know himself well, without going through much bitter, as well as much sweet, discipline. All discipline is designed to teach him his own weakness, and to teach him at the same time the strength of his covenant God. Am I in a dark, in a dull, in a stupid frame of mind ? The oath of God is alive, ever alive ; as full of himself as it ever was : there is no lethargy in his oath !

4. The "*Amen*" at the conclusion of this prayer reproves severely and bitterly every irreverent use of it. How many thousand times have you and I used this prayer, little thinking of its true import. Alas ! in what have we been engaged ; and how does it still flow from the lips of unbelievers, without any communication with the human intellect or the human heart ! But will God accept of such services as these ? We must stand before the bar of God ; and if any go on thoughtlessly repeating this sublime prayer, woe unto them. People dream of going to heaven by doing the best they can, as they call it, and leaving the Saviour to make good their deficiencies ; but I must tell you plainly, that if God were to enter into judgment with us, we must be

condemned even for the imperfection of our best performances.

5. It reproves likewise the neglect of this prayer ; and the neglect not only of the prayer, but of the “ *Amen* ” at the conclusion of it. God delights in being reminded of his covenant engagements, and of his oath in making his engagements. Let me read to you a passage of Scripture. When Ezra opened the book of the Lord in the presence of the Israelites of old, it is said, “ Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God : and all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands : and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground.” (Neh. viii. 6.) It is dreadful to find this infinitely rich title of Messiah insulted as it is.

6. This word teaches us that our prayers should be intelligible, and pours contempt on prayers in an unknown tongue. We are all to pray together. Suppose, when we meet together, one were to pray in French, another in English, and another in Welch ; what confusion there would be ! We might pray, but we should not understand one another. God intended that we should be social worshippers ; and for this purpose we must use an intelligible language. They all understand each other in heaven ; there is nothing unintelligible there ; all is plain, all is lucid. Away then with all the imposture of Popery, and praying in an unknown tongue.



7. This word teaches us that our hearts should be engaged in prayer. God himself tells us of some who draw near to him with their lips, but their hearts are removed far from him. (Isa. xxix. 13.) Oh how they insult God in so doing ! How will persons sometimes impose upon themselves ; and still think, in the midst of all their mockery of religion, that God will receive their prayers ! When they visit a friend, they carry their hearts with them ; but, when they wait upon God, they act as if they thought him not worthy of their affections. Alas ! this is the worship which thousands and millions in the present day are offering to the Lord. Do you think that such worship will be accepted by the Lord ? My brethren, where are our hearts ? Are we desirous that they should be safe in the bosom of God himself ? This is true religion !

8. Lastly : We are taught that our prayers ought to be in unison with the Divine will. In this case, they most assuredly will be heard and answered. " In this we have confidence," says the apostle, " that if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us." (1 John v. 14.) In some temporal things we may err ; but it is scarcely possible for individuals, acquainted with the truth of God, to err in spiritual things. I do not say it is impossible ; but, in the midst of all the imperfections of our prayers, let it be remembered that the Saviour corrects all our



errors : they fall into *his* hands, and *there* all their imperfections stop : they go no farther ; he buries them all in the depths of the sea ; he clothes all our prayers with his perfections, and then presents them to the Father, perfumed with his own incense. O what a friend we have on high ! Be not discouraged, then, because there are imperfections in your prayers : prayer implies not only the imperfections of other services, but its own : and this we should remember ; that as Jesus bore the iniquities of our holy things on his cross, he will also bear them in his intercession.

To sum up the whole, then, in a few words :

1. First of all, in using the Lord's Prayer, we fulfil the whole law ; we pray for God's grace, not only for ourselves, but for each other. The law was intended to live in the gospel, otherwise it would be no gospel. The distinction made on this subject by our old divines is this : We are delivered from the law as a covenant of works, to be conformed to it as a rule of life. And this is the meaning of our reply to the various commands, "Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law"—deliver us from it as a covenant, for we merit its curses, and incline us to honour it as the rule of our lives. Here, then, both for ourselves and for each other, the grace of God is desired : the greatest and most glorious blessing—a blessing of which we shall

constantly stand in need. The time is fast approaching when we shall not stand in need of any thing we have here below. I shall say, farewell to the sun, I want thee no longer ; to the moon, farewell, I want thee no more ; farewell to all things here below : but the grace which God hath bestowed will end in imperishable glory.

2. It involves in it the law of love : “ *Our* Father,” “ *Our* daily bread,” “ *Our* trespasses.” We should pray for each other invariably ; and may we make a rule of praying for each other as a congregation. As a family of heaven, pray for your minister ; and pray that he may pray for you. We have this treasure in earthen vessels : nevertheless, these are the instruments God makes use of to teach you the truths of the gospel ; and they are better fitted for it than angels. Angels might tell you glorious things, but they could not sympathize with you ; angels could not preach to sinners, as they do not stand in need of mercy themselves. But a minister of the gospel is one inspired with new life by the Almighty, and then commissioned to proclaim glad tidings to others. God says to his minister, I do not send angels to preach the gospel ; but I send *thee*, whose life I have restored ; *thee*, once dead in trespasses and sins : I send *thee* to preach to thy fellow-sinners ; tell them that I have had mercy on *thee*, and thou canst not tell

them more of my mercy : throw thy heart into theirs ; enter into the inmost recesses of their bosoms ; meet every enemy, preaching the glories of Immanuel, and tell them that it is his purpose to triumph *in* his family as fully and completely as he has triumphed *for* them.

It is an advantage to a minister to have many afflictions, many trials ; and why, my brethren ? Because then he may tell his hearers not what he has heard, but what he has *felt* and *handled* of the word of God. He may take the truth from his own bosom, and throw it into the bosoms of his congregation. Do not despise the ministers of God ; God will not suffer them to be despised. But do not idolize them : treat them with the respect that is due to them as the ministers of God, whether they possess one or ten talents.

3. We should deprecate the idea of receiving any thing spiritual or temporal but at the hand of God : “ Be careful for nothing ; but in every thing, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory, by Christ Jesus.” (Phil. iv. 6, 19.)

4. Lastly, it involves a prayer for preservation from every evil ; more especially from sin, from Satan, and from everlasting death ; and that we may inherit the blessings of the eternal covenant in glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

## SERMON XII.

## SPIRITUAL WORSHIP.

JOHN iv. 24.

*God is a Spirit : and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.*

THESE words form part of the interesting interview between the Saviour of mankind and the woman of Samaria.

He made himself known to her as the Messiah, or, according to the Greek, as the Christ ; and he makes himself known to all his family in the same character. We have his truth in our hands, and do not need any interview with him, as man, to teach us who he is, and what we are. As God, he enters into the inmost recesses of our hearts ; and by his Spirit, tells us who and what we are ; presenting us with as full and faithful an exhibition of our lives, as he presented to the woman of Samaria. “The woman saith unto

him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews."

Some of the rays of divine truth, as appears from the context, had reached even the dark minds of the Samaritans; but salvation was of the Jews. They preserved among them the forms and ceremonies prescribed by God himself; and though the majority of the nation understood them not, yet the spiritual Jews saw through them, and prized them, as typifying that Christ, who was to come to be the Saviour of the world.

Jesus said, "Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship." God not only may be, but is, worshipped, wherever there are sincere followers of him. The gospel may be preached any where, and every where on earth. It has been faithfully preached in a variety of places, and the Spirit of God has set his seal to its truth. The Saviour himself preached on a mountain, and afterwards in a ship; evidently teaching his church in future ages, that the gospel may be preached wherever individuals may be found to hear it. The expediency of this may, in some

cases, be doubted ; but this does not affect the general truth in the least degree. God may now be worshipped any where and every where. Jesus then adds, in the words of the text, “ God is a spirit : and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”

I. THE SPIRITUALITY OF GOD. The first thing that necessarily claims our consideration is, *God is a Spirit* : in other words, a rational, immaterial, and therefore invisible Being ; emphatically styled in Scripture, “ The Father of spirits ;” the Creator and Preserver of all other spirits ; pervading their essence, and, by his mighty energy, preserving them in existence : and he will, according to his promise, continue to preserve them for ever. God is a Spirit ; such a spirit that he pervades all finite spirits ; a spirit in every respect infinitely superior to all those who are his offspring.

I would consider God as a spirit ; first, *negatively*.

All matter, all time, all space, and by necessary consequence, all limitation and imperfection, are to be banished to an infinite and eternal distance. Nothing but spirit could have existed from eternity. In the light of this important truth, we see the awful error into which some of the ancient philosophers had fallen, who invested matter with the attributes of Deity by making it eternal. Matter eternal—in the midst of all its



changes ! Impossible. Every thing in the creature has an immediate tendency to dissolution, which, were it not for the energy of creative power, would invariably take place. What are we to think of man, even in his best estate, with all the advantages of learning and science, unenlightened by revelation ? How awfully ignorant of the true God ! He is in this respect on a level with the most ignorant savage.

The deification of matter is atheism and idolatry. The detail of this idolatry is presented to us by the ancient philosophers in the worship of fruits, vegetables, and plants ; of gods of gold and silver, wood and stone. Here a truth presents itself to our consideration, *i. e.* the inability of man to see the necessary dependence of the creature upon the Creator. Without divine revelation, man could never have understood the nature of his dependence on God, or his duty to him.

Whatever we find in the worship of different nations, in different ages, is only a corruption of revelation. Some of the rays of divine truth have evidently travelled, more or less, almost round the habitable globe ; and wherever we discover any thing that approximates, even in the remotest degree, to that which is good, it must be traced to God : while all the ignorance, imperfection, and evil, blended with the worship, must be ascribed to the creature.

It is equally true, that spiritual evil cannot have



existed from eternity. It is an utter absurdity to suppose it. Spiritual evil is a deviation from a given rule. That which exists from eternity is subject to no rule, but lives irrespective of all rule. It is itself the rule. God is a Spirit, an infinitely pure Spirit : he has existed from eternity, and will exist to eternity.

I go on to consider God as a Spirit, in the second place, *positively*.

1. *Necessity* presents itself. Independence must involve necessity in it, in the highest degree. Independence must also involve eternity in it ; “From everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.” “The High and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity.” This is what he says of himself. Now mark—to apply my subject in some measure as I go on—mark the interesting truth that flows from the necessary existence of God. Necessity, in its primary and highest sense, is connected with good only. I need not dwell on this truth ; I leave it to the reflecting minds of those who hear me. Consider what I have said, and pray for me, that I may ever find the bliss of this life in seeking the welfare of your immortal spirits ; while I bless God for having given to such an unworthy worm as I am, one of the most interesting congregations under heaven.

2. *Freedom*.

Freedom of volition existing in the highest degree : and this freedom at the same time, para-

doxical as it may appear, the child of necessity : I could prove (if time permitted) that the most glorious freedom that can inhabit the bosom of finite being, must be the offspring of necessity :—volition, flying on the wings of infinite wisdom and infinite benevolence ; volition, comprising only the good of the creature, for nothing but good can emanate from the sovereign will of Deity. Here we connect not only necessity, but freedom in its highest sense, with good, and good only.

If we consider penal evil—I mean the punishment of sin, whether in time or in eternity—this is to be traced to the necessary perfections of God. Much more than all *good* in the creature, in life, in death, and for ever, is to be traced to him, not only to the freedom of His volition, but to the necessity of His nature. How lovely, how infinitely lovely a being is God ! Consider again evil in both a moral and penal point of view ; and trace it to its source ; to the freedom, the abused freedom, of the creature in its moral, and to the necessary perfections of the Creator in its penal, character.

3. *Power.* Infinite Power must necessarily be one of the attributes of self-existent, independent essence ; this invariably wafts his will to its destiny. How striking the contrast between the Creator and the creature ! To will, in God, is not at all easier than to do : to do, in him is as easy as to will. In fact, to will, and to do, may be con-

sidered as synonymous in God ; for what he wills, that he certainly must do. Here then essential independent spirit leaves all finite being at an infinite and eternal distance. It cannot be said of any finite being, that it is as easy for him to do, as to will. Satan cannot do all he would, or he would bury us in the depths of hell at the present moment. Angels of light cannot do all the good they would ; they cannot love and serve God as they would, for they know that more is due to Deity than they can ever present.

But to consider moral and penal evil in their ultimate consequences. The punishment of the wicked has far more of what is negative, than of what is positive in it. All blissful communion is withheld ; and God exhibits himself in the terrible glories of his justice. In the light of this truth consider what the Lord says : “ As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked.” No : the wicked are punished in hell quite exclusively of his sovereign will. It is not a matter of choice in Deity, whether the wicked shall be punished or not ; it is not an arbitrary act in him ; but it is an act of that justice which emanates from his necessary perfections. Deity then is lovely, even if we read his perfections in the light of those flames where “ the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.”

But contrast this with the bliss of Deity, and

you will find the positive glories of God. Not only is it true that the glory which kindles and keeps alive the flames of hell, kindles and keeps alive the heaven of his people; but all the perfections of God that visit his enemies with punishment, shine in infinitely greater splendour in the salvation of his people; and they will for ever fill and pervade all heaven, and constitute the bliss and peace of the heavenly hosts; because Messiah died, and exposed himself to his Father's vengeance, that he might for ever close the gates of hell against us, and open those of heaven to receive and bless us through all eternity. What a triumphant truth is this! Could we grasp it with the might, and in the energy of divine power, (as we soon shall do,) our happy spirits would leave their frail frames, and wing their flight from earth to heaven, to live in the presence of God for ever and ever.

4. *Omniscience* must necessarily be an attribute of that Spirit who is independent. This perfection is presented to us in the most interesting manner in holy writ. The Lord is a God of knowledge. When the question was put to Peter by Christ, "Lovest thou me?" his answer was, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." All the perfections of God are co-equal and co-existent.

5. *Omnipresence*. He inhabits all time, all space, all ages, at one and the same moment. I

quote his own testimony : “ The high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity.” He inhabits not only eternity, but the minutest fraction of a second of time. He not only inhabits infinite space, but pervades the minutest particle of matter. Father, Son, and Spirit, present every where ; present in infinite space ; present in infinite and eternal ages ; in each portion of time ; in every particle of matter : if this were not the case, how could he be omniscient ? True, we cannot comprehend this, and we never shall.

6. *Holiness*. This attribute, as comprising the beauty of Deity, is in its exercise necessarily connected with all his other attributes, and consequently affords us the highest consolation and encouragement.

It has been justly said, “ Holiness is the beauty of Deity, as power is his life.” This holiness consists in an infinite love of order, and an infinite hatred of disorder ; in an infinite love of good, and an infinite hatred of evil : and this is the attribute which most immediately presents itself to the consideration of all his worshippers. “ Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts.”

Many other things might be mentioned, but I go on to consider

II. THE NATURE OF SPIRITUAL WORSHIP. It must be like God. He cannot accept of any thing from his creature that is not like himself : it

would be infinitely unworthy of his perfections to do so. Thoughtless sinners ! consider this ; and then dream of going to heaven when death snaps the thread of life. Man was originally created in the image of God, not only intellectually, but spiritually. Purity was one of the attributes of angels in heaven, and afterwards of Adam in Paradise.

What is it, then, I would ask, to approach God, and to worship him, in spirit and in truth ?

It is, to revere God above all beings, and above all things. This is to worship God ; and this indeed will be a worship worthy of God. But let not weak believers be discouraged : the most glorious provisions have been made by God, and are given to us in worshipping, and made known to us to encourage us to worship him here below. The heart of Messiah primarily ascended to his Father and his God. The consideration of himself was always secondary in his bosom. Connect the purity of his humanity, with the dignity of his person : bear in mind that all the glory of Deity pervaded all he thought and did as man ; and let it ever be remembered, that in him we approach the Father. In him it is worthy of God to say, that “ he does not despise the day of small things.” The least particle of true religion will ascend to the throne of God, in the intercession of that Saviour who has died, not only to redeem, but to save us with an everlasting salva-



tion. When angels were called into existence, God was the first object that arrested their attention. When Adam was created it was so with him. He found himself, if I may so speak, wholly enveloped in Deity. How pure, how happy, must those beings have been, as they originally came from the hand of their Creator!

“God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”

*In spirit.* The soul, as well as the body, must be prostrate before the Lord; which is never the case until the Holy Spirit changes the heart. But, my brethren, it is now high time that I should ask myself, and you, individually, What sort of worshippers are *we*? Do we apparently give the body to God, and the soul to lying vanities? I would enter the inmost recesses of your hearts, and ask you, How have you been engaged in worshipping God? Has the soul been given to God? Do not mistake me; my object is not to be personal, but characteristic. It is the province of a minister to follow his congregation to their families, to their closets, into their hearts; and appealing to your consciences individually, in the presence of the living God, I ask the question.—How do you answer it?

*In truth*—as opposed to all types and shadows, as embracing all the glorious realities typified by the Jewish rites. Under the Jewish dispensation were typified not only the sacrifice of Christ, but



the work of the Holy Spirit also. In truth—as it is written: “Through him,” that is, Jesus, “we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father;” and nothing short of this is worshipping God in spirit and in truth. In truth—in purity. Purity, indeed, (we confess to our shame) is not the only inmate of our bosoms; but it does certainly exist in the bosom of every true worshipper, warring against every thing that is opposed to God; and against the sinful principle which is ceaselessly engaged in seeking its destruction. It is a war of extermination, one must die; and, blessed be God, the covenant of Father, Son, and Spirit, has doomed the delinquent to perish eternally. The Saviour died that sin might be destroyed, and the sinner saved.

But what is it to worship God? The worship of God must involve this in it,—a principle within the human bosom disposing its possessor to honour God, as God honours himself. Nothing less than this is worthy of being called the worship of God. In the light of this truth how awfully destructive is every false religion!

The worship of God involves in it union and communion with God himself; for a principle that resembles Deity, cannot live but in Deity. It is in receiving the word of God into the heart that we obtain the strongest assurance of all its glorious doctrines. The nature of things, and the necessities of man, proclaim them true, and

the human bosom echoing divine revelation, welcomes God again to his own legitimate temple.

Chemists tell us of affinities—of some things that blend together as if they loved each other, while there are others which it is impossible to amalgamate; no skill, no art, can blend them. Now, consider man as the enemy of God: can he be united to God in that state? Impossible. Can he be received into bliss in that state? Impossible. There is an impossibility in Deity, and in the creature.

Scientific men invariably study the laws of nature; and if they wish the works of art to succeed, and to be transmitted to future ages, they act in consonance with those laws; for in attempting to oppose them they would only meet with disappointment, and in the end destruction. The analogy holds good in spiritual things; for the believer must do the same in seeking the favour and friendship of God, in life and death and for ever. The law, the gospel, and the perfections of God, must be studied: the soul and all its powers must delightfully flow into these things, or man is undone for ever. To give another illustration of the same truth: if you find two friends delighted with the society of each other, you will discover that there is something similar in their dispositions: they may differ in many things, but there is love—a principle com-

mon to both : and they are united and cemented in the bonds of friendship.

I have often told you that the work of the Holy Spirit is very plain and simple, as far as it is requisite for us to discern it ; for all the purposes of doctrinal, practical, and experimental religion. He testifies to the truths of divine revelation ; and teaches men to apply the principles of common sense in the study and reception of them.

III. Consider THE NECESSITY OF SPIRITUAL WORSHIP. It involves in it the necessity of the regenerating influences and in-dwelling of the Holy Spirit. What is sin? The abuse of freedom in the creature, directing all the energies of the soul to itself ; and, as an awful consequence, excluding the Creator. “ God is a spirit ; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.” Spiritual worship involves in it the freedom of God and of the creature. Man must be taught to use his freedom aright ; and this lesson can only be taught by the Spirit of the living God. This necessity is not an arbitrary constitution of things ; it is to be traced to the existence of God, and therefore to his necessary perfections. It is proved by all the arguments and with all the eloquence of God himself. Behold Messiah ! The death of an infinite and eternal Person, proves in the clearest manner, that it is inconsistent with the perfections of God

to save any human soul, unless that soul be taught to worship him in spirit and in truth.

To conclude with a few observations:

1. Look within individually. Look within, thoughtless sinner! Behold in man, the descendant of fallen Adam, an awful contrast to God. His freedom is invariably abused. Connect this with the reiterated remonstrances and protestations of conscience, and you will see that sin is exclusively your own. See, then, in the light of this truth, the absolute necessity of divine interposition to save ruined man; and that in a two-fold point of view—by an infinite sacrifice, and by Almighty power. Grace has been called irresistible. This, as Mr. Newton observes, is not the best term; because grace is, and has been again and again resisted in the bosoms of the family of God; but it is invincible; as it is written, “Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power,” made by the sovereign will of God immutably and eternally one with Christ.

Here a glorious necessity presents itself, the parent of the most delightful freedom, in the bosom of the believer. Once he was the voluntary slave of Satan; but now renewed in the spirit of his mind, he is become the willing servant of the King of kings.

2. See the awful consequences of man's wilful apostacy from God. He is in communion

with the father of lies; and there are individuals on earth who avowedly worship the devil, who are honest, and confess what they are doing: but, indeed, all the enemies of God are in communion with the devil, as our Lord said, "Ye are of your father the devil, the lusts of your father ye will do." (John viii. 44.) Man is naturally the worshipper of Satan: he became his vassal in Eden, and continues so until delivered by the grace of God.

Look at this large metropolis: and who can forbear weeping over, what I may justly call, the wreck of humanity. See the wickedness that is going on; and, to increase it, how many editors of newspapers are advocating the cause of infidelity, and diffusing their pestilential productions to an alarming extent, even on this holy day. Professors of religion, let me beseech you to honour the Sabbath more and more in your families; let no idol intervene between you and your God. A very little consideration would teach us, that if this day were to be sacrificed as it has been in France, we should soon travel back to a state of barbarism, and that of the worst kind, in the midst of science and literature, which without God harden the heart more than all the ignorance of the most uncivilized savage.

3rd, and lastly. Consider that true religion invests its possessor with the highest honour. There is nothing in this world to be compared to

it. All the pride of learning, and the pomp of kings, sink into insignificance before it. Visit a peasant in his cottage, who has nothing, perhaps, but what is absolutely necessary for subsistence : behold in him the image of the living God ; and you see infinitely more glory than in the pride of universities, and in the courts of kings without it. Though destitute of all earthly advantages, it raises its possessor to the highest honour.

The subject is so sublime, so grand, so rich, and interesting, that no one but God himself can do ample justice to it. Could I ascend to heaven this evening, and return, after having borrowed the eloquence of saints and angels, it would not suffice. If I held in my hand a telescope so admirably made and adjusted that by its mighty powers I could point out the whole planetary system, not excepting the most remotely distant worlds that skirt the creation of God, and as each bright orb passed its focus in rapid succession, could tell you, ‘ *I* was present when *that* flew into existence ; when the stupendous machinery of the heavens first began to describe its ponderous and mighty evolutions, *I* participated in the glorious spectacle ; and when the birth-day song of the morning stars arose, *my ears* bore testimony to its glorious praise ;’ doubtless your surprise and astonishment would be excited. But as a Christian I can tell you more : ‘ I am in union and communion with God ;

the creative and mighty energy of his Spirit has called into existence within my bosom his grandest, his sublimest work, even his own spiritual image, compared with which all creation vanishes into nothing.' O the sublimity and simplicity of true religion ! The religion of Jesus, descending from the bosom of the Father, imparts the life of God to the soul of man ; raising it from beneath the feet of all enemies, to survive the wreck of time, and the conflagration of the world, to enthrone it with God for ever.



## SERMON XIII.

## ADAM A TYPE OF CHRIST.

ROM. v. 14.

*The figure of him that was to come.*

MAN, under the influence of his own disposition, is invariably prone to forget what he ought to be most intimately conversant with, namely, God and himself.

Individuals have distinguished themselves by their knowledge, and have been eminently useful to their fellow-creatures; yet they have passed through life as thoughtless of God, and of the welfare of their immortal souls, as if no spirit, whether finite or infinite, existed. And how is this to be accounted for? Scripture solves the difficulty; and not only so, but presents us with the remedy which God himself has provided.

How indisposed men are in general to direct their attention to original sin! they cannot bear the idea of it: and if they do speak of it, they cloud and clog it with so many formidable difficulties, that we are induced to imagine that they studiously frighten themselves from the consideration of it. Yet every thing that surrounds us, reminds us continually of it. We find sometimes the empire of death in the womb; and some of the progeny of Adam, travelling (if I may so speak) into eternity, before they have become inhabitants of time.

“For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression.” (Rom. v. 13, 14.) The apostle in this passage can evidently mean no other persons than ideots and infants; clearly proving, by an appeal to the testimony of our senses, that we are all fallen in Adam: and then he immediately adds, “Who is the figure of him that was to come.” Adam, in the first state of his existence, was a type of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This unwise question is sometimes asked: ‘What would have been the consequence had Adam remained in a state of innocence; had he and his posterity persevered in their obedience to Jehovah?’ The question evidently supposes a different constitution of things. Adam was called

into existence ; not predestinated to fall, while God saw, with unerring accuracy, that he certainly would fall. The world, with all it contains at the present moment, was intended for the use and service of fallen beings ; and not only so, but it was evidently, in its original creation, intended to be the theatre of human redemption, and, in a limited sense, of human salvation. It was destined to be the spot on which God meant to manifest himself to man, in all the glories of his love ; to raise him from the ruins of the fall, and eternally to bless him, in and with himself.

Although Adam was the greatest transgressor of the human race, because he knew that his fall would involve in it the fall of the whole family ; yet he was, perhaps, more honoured than any of his descendants : he was the most striking type of Christ that we have recorded in scripture.

I solicit your attention to the six following points of resemblance :—

I. Adam was a type of Christ, in his original creation. He was called into existence like the angels of light, in a state of perfection ; but in one respect he was differently constituted from them. He possessed not only a spirit—an immortal spirit, in common with the angels, but he also possessed a body. His body was first created, and God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.

The glory of the first creation, was the image of God in the soul. The glory of Adam consisted in being called into existence, in the spiritual image of Deity : doubtless, he must necessarily have been created in the intellectual image of God ; for, though the intellect may live without spirituality, spirituality cannot live without intellect. No one but a reasonable being can possibly be a religious being.

In possessing a body as well as a soul, Adam was eminently typical of Christ. As God and man, Christ possessed two distinct natures in one person ; typified by matter and spirit in the creation of the first Adam. Both created by the same Spirit—both created in the same purity—a pure soul created for a pure body—both of them wholly undefiled by sin, as they came from the hand of the Creator. The Spirit that called our first parent into existence is evidently the parent of the second Adam : he called his humanity into existence, in a state of spotless purity, but not in every respect as Adam was called into existence. I need not tell you, that the image of the living God is one and the same in every moral agent who wears it ; it may differ in degrees of glory, but in kind it must be the same. The truth with respect to the humanity of the Son of God is this—it was called into existence in a state of spotless purity, subject to all the innocent imperfections of humanity ; and in this respect only, to the ex-

ternal senses, our Saviour must have appeared less glorious here on earth, than the first Adam would have appeared, could we have beheld him in his original innocence.

In the Athanasian creed, the Saviour is very justly said to be, man of the substance of his mother, as well as God from eternity. This is truth; he was man, of the substance of his mother, as much as we are of the substance of our mothers—the only difference between him and ourselves is this, he was not the subject of sin; he was the only one of all the race of Adam, not in the covenant of Adam. The covenant was made with Adam, not with Eve. We do not fall in Eve, but in Adam. Had Eve been a fœderal head as Adam was, the Saviour's humanity must have been involved in transgression, and in all its awful consequences.

God could not have entered into covenant, either with the first or second Adam, had they not been perfectly free from sin in every respect.

Adam's body was as free from the influence of sin as his soul: the Saviour's humanity was as free from the influence of sin as his Deity. The humanity of the Son of God, was, is, and ever will be, as dependent on Deity as the humanity of any of his brethren; while every essential imperfection is removed to an infinite and eternal distance from him. The dimensions of Deity interpose between the Saviour's humanity and sin.

And listen to me, my brethren, while I assert, without fear of successful contradiction, that his brethren will eventually be as far removed from sin as he himself was, and is removed from it.

II. Adam was a covenant head, and as such, a type of Christ. He was the representative of all his family. Had he continued in a state of obedience, his uprightness would have been necessarily connected with the obedience of his offspring. All his descendants are evidently involved in his fall, for Scripture explicitly declares, “that in Adam all die.”

The image of God was annihilated by one transgression, and we all enter the world destitute of that image. We have never yet heard of, or seen, a son or daughter of Adam evincing any spirituality, till changed by the grace of God.

I do not mean to deny the possibility (indeed I should rather be disposed to insist on the certainty) of some being changed in the womb, and taken thence to heaven. I rather like to dwell upon this, that I may be the instrument of consolation to suffering mothers; and who can know the feelings of mothers, when in thought they follow their offspring from time into eternity? It is poor consolation to say to them, ‘Dry up your tears, they can avail nothing;’ but if you can tell them on scriptural ground, ‘God has

taken your child to himself,' *this* is a source of real consolation.

Do not murmur against the Lord, my suffering sisters, when he takes from you your infant offspring: ought you not to think yourselves highly honoured by the Lord of lords, and King of kings, in being the parents of those who are now singing his praises in glory? "Suffer little children to come to me, and forbid them not;" they are raised in the second Adam, though fallen in the first.

The Saviour is likewise a covenant head. He is the representative of all his family. His obedience is theirs—his bliss will be theirs for ever. The obedience of Christ, imputed to us by God, while the blessing is received by faith, is made ours as completely, as if we had honoured the law of God in its command, and in its curse, in our own persons.

But facts prove in the strongest manner, that they are both covenant heads and representatives. The family of each inherits the disposition of the parent. If sinners only, of the race of Adam, we possess a sinful disposition like his own; but, let it be remembered, that no moral agent can be under the necessity of committing sin. How absurd then is the conduct of those who charge Adam with their fall, while at the same time they wilfully indulge themselves in their own iniquity!



In the fall of the first Adam, we behold the ruin of the human race. In the resurrection of the second Adam we behold the triumph of all his family—of all who believe in him. When I speak of the family of Jesus Christ, do not attach any error to what I say ; do not imagine that there is any thing in Deity that banishes from him any one who hears the gospel of Christ. Do justice to the glories of Deity as a sovereign and a legislator, and you annihilate at once half the difficulties which have been started on this subject.

III. In the dominion given him over every creature, Adam was an eminent type of Christ.

Adam was constituted the monarch of all things here below. All the creatures of God were brought to Adam ; he gave them names, strikingly descriptive of their individual natural propensities. He had not only a dominion given him over the beast of the field, the birds of the air, and the fishes of the sea ; but he had a *royal mind* ; he was fit for government : and while in a state of innocence, the brutes acknowledged him as their lord. This dominion has been repurchased by the second Adam. Brutes are soon taught to know the superiority of man, even in his fallen estate.

But the Antitype has a far more glorious dominion : he has all these things under his command ; for all things, both in heaven and in earth, are given into his hand. His kingdom is an

everlasting kingdom, infinite in extent and duration.

What a delightful, what a triumphant idea ! That one who is man, like ourselves, as dependent upon God as we are, that he should be ruling the universe—that the reins of universal government should be in his hands at the present moment—that his intellect, as God and man, pervades the bosoms of all our enemies ! With what a wonderful knowledge must his humanity of necessity be endowed, to enable him to exercise all the functions of the glorious office, with which God has invested him !

Delightful idea ! Humanity, in the person of the Son, participates in the honours of Deity. I do not mean to say, that the humanity of Christ, *exclusively considered*, is an object of worship ; but as a divine person, his humanity united to Deity is an object of worship. Now mark the rich lesson this presents to us. It indicates, that God intends to raise his family to the highest glories, to the most intimate union and communion with himself. The glory in which Christ participates at the present moment in heaven, is the richest pledge that can be given to us of the glory that we are destined to enjoy in eternity. “ What is man, that thou art mindful of him ? or the son of man, that thou visitest him ? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels ; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst

set him over the works of thy hands : thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour." (Heb. ii. 6—9.)

We find in the eighth Psalm, the first and second Adam. The first forfeited his dominion, but it was repurchased by the second. Every temporal, as well as every spiritual blessing, is the purchase of the infinitely precious blood of Christ. May this truth, under the influences of the divine Spirit, reign in each of our consciences. We shall then know how to use, without abusing the creatures of God : all with which we are connected will then involve in it an act of worship to God.

IV. The garden of Eden where Adam was placed, was a type of that heaven which Christ has purchased for us. Eden was a place of purity ; but Eden was only a very faint type of that glory which has been revealed to some, and will be shortly revealed to the whole of the Lord's family.

The tree of life was strikingly typical of Jesus Christ. Adam, as soon as he had transgressed, was driven with infamy from Eden. "And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is

become as one of us, to know good and evil : and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever : therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man : and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubims, and a flaming sword, which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.” (Gen. iii. 22, &c. ;) This was to hinder man from any legal efforts—to prevent man from attempting to do any thing to justify or sanctify himself. Nothing but death presented itself to Adam, from above and from below. Perhaps our first parents, after they had transgressed, were the most miserable beings in this world. None have ever known guilt preying on the conscience as they did. Consider the glorious state in which they once were, and the awful contrast that must have been perpetually presented to them. Their sun set at noon in Eden, and they felt themselves suddenly enveloped in the shades of night.

But in the Antitype we find another tree of life, “yielding its fruit every month,” in the depth of winter as well as in the warmth of summer, and fruitfulness of autumn ; teaching us, that there is an infinite sufficiency in Christ, in whatever state, internal or external, we may be found.

V. Adam, in his union with Eve, was a striking type of Christ and his church; to this the apostle refers in the fifth chapter of the epistle to the Ephesians: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word. That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, *even as the Lord the church. For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.*

It is evident, then, that Adam, in his union with Eve, was a striking type of Christ in his union with the church; and that the relationship at present subsisting between husband and wife, is symbolical of that which subsists between Christ and his church. It is lamentable to think that this relationship should be so little understood—that individuals should live so long, without knowing any thing of its holy influence.

View Adam and Eve, in their original innocence, united together by God himself.

The Lord caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and while in this sleep, he took a rib from his side, and formed woman. She was not taken (observes some commentator, very justly, I think Matthew Henry,) from his head, to triumph over him ; not from his feet, to be trampled upon by him ; but from his side, from the neighbourhood of his heart, to be loved by him. Husbands love your wives, as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it. It was when the Saviour was in the sleep of death, that the spear entered his side, when the fountain was opened, and subsequently flowed, for sin and uncleanness. His church derives her existence from him, and here we behold another striking type of Christ and his church.

VI. The compound relationship, which subsisted between Adam and Eve in Eden. She derived her existence from him ; afterwards united to him, she was a second self in every respect, and doubtless, while in a state of innocence, she was as dear to him as he was to himself.

But, singular as this was, it is but faintly typical of the relationship subsisting between Christ and his church. His bride is his own flesh—bone of his bone, blood of his blood, flesh of his flesh, and, more than all this, spirit of his spirit.



Considering Christ as God, and as Mediator between God and man, he is at once the parent and the husband of his church. “Thy Maker is thine husband.”

If we consider the affection subsisting between Adam and Eve in the period of their innocence, it affords us a lively emblem of the love subsisting between Christ and his church. He loved her as himself—never was there love like his. For her he honoured the law most completely, in its curse as well as in its command. He loved his spouse, his bride, as he loved himself.

But Adam presents us, not only with a striking type of the Lord Jesus Christ, but with a deep shade—a shade which serves only to give prominence to, and exhibit that beauty which the Saviour possesses, and which appears in heaven at the present moment.

1. We find in the first Adam all the shades of hell—all the shades of error, and of spiritual night. But consider the second Adam. “The first man is of the earth earthy : the second man is the *Lord from heaven*.” (1 Cor. xv. 47.) Yes ; though of the earth—though flesh of our flesh—though (as it is said of him) he descended into the lower parts of the earth, and was formed in it as we are, yet he was God over all blessed for ever. Beware, my hearers, I conjure you, of error in principle, as much, at the least, as of vice in practice. My brethren, do not trifle with



sin : pray to God that he may give you a tender, an exquisitely tender conscience ; and that you may be disposed to listen to its softest whispers, while it only echoes the breathing of his divine Spirit.

2. The first Adam, in his original creation, was only a living soul ; but the second Adam was a quickening spirit. All his brethren were dead in trespasses and sins : “ You hath he quickened,” says the apostle. (Eph. ii. 1.) We derive death and destruction from the first Adam ; life and bliss and eternal glory from the second !

3. The first fell, and all his brethren fell in *him* ; the second descends into the wreck of humanity. No one ever fathomed that pit which is emphatically called bottomless, but the incarnate Son of God. He grappled with the monster in all its rage, took its sting from it, and annihilated it in his own bosom.

4. Eve seduced Adam into sin ; and Adam foolishly, weakly, and wickedly, fell at once into the temptation. But here is one who allures fallen beings to himself ; who speaks the language of omnipotence to the heart of man ; who raises him from the dregs of infamy, to the heights of glory above !

5. The first Adam forfeited every thing that is good, and purchased for himself and his family every thing that is evil : and is not this a deep

shade? And is it not necessary that we should fix our eyes exclusively on the second Adam? He annihilates all evil, purchases all good, and is eternally triumphant himself, that his church may triumph for ever in him.

To apply my subject.

I. Consider the doctrine of original sin, as we find it in scripture. It is, alas! too frequently clouded and clogged with manifold difficulties. There is a great deal sufficiently plain to the intellect of an individual who is determined, at all events, to buy truth, and not to sell it. Some say, "it is a mysterious subject; we cannot go far into it; we must leave it." I would not say so. I wish to go as far as possible into it on this side eternity. I know that God has blessed man with intellect, and he intended that the intellect of man should be as fully imbued with divine truth, as his heart and affections.

We hear it sometimes said, "It seems to be hard that we should all fall in consequence of the sin of one." But where is the hardship? Sovereign blessings only were forfeited by the sin of Adam. Neither being, nor well-being is due from God to any: and if we consider this subject thoroughly, we shall be constrained to say, "Thou art just, O God, in the midst of thy judgments."

Again, I would say, that our individual trans-

gression involves in it the violation of the Adamic covenant. The curse cannot reach the conscience of any son or daughter of Adam, but in his own wilful, individual transgression. See another truth which bursts upon us: suppose infants are condemned—they must, before they are condemned and consigned to eternal ruin, wilfully, and in the full use of their intellect, reject God.

But learn the certainty of the ruin. Man, left to his own evil disposition, imitates Adam in transgression; he delights to do what Adam did. We shall not be eventually condemned for the exclusive sin of Adam; but in exact proportion as we have followed him in transgression.

2. I solicit your attention to the great and glorious Antitype.

Behold the provision—the work of God: a righteousness to justify from every charge—a righteousness which removes for ever from the records of God, as a judge, all the guilt of the individual who believes. Finite being has no merit to extend to his fellow-being. The law which condemns an individual cannot justify him. We must then be indebted to *another*, even to the great and glorious antitype—to Christ, who is our all in all, for a justifying righteousness. He has filled the curse and the command with all his own glories. He has brought in an everlasting righteousness, and he gives his Holy Spirit to confer on the believer the disposition of

his child, and bless him with his own image, so that his salvation is as full and complete as God himself can make it.

3. Live on the wealth of the second Adam. It comprises all that you require, and every blessing treasured up in him for his family. I pray God to open your hearts to feel the force of this truth, that every undue anxiety may vanish, and that you may know and feel that God has provided for you in time, as well as for your welfare in eternity.

4. Husbands and wives, consider the relationship subsisting between you, as members of Christ and his church ; and if you mean to be happy in each other, remember that it cannot be but in true religion.

When our great High Priest celebrated the nuptials of Eden, all was done under the influences of the divine Spirit. Remember you owe each other a debt, not only of affection, but of respect—more affection, more respect, than you owe any other persons under heaven. Woe be to the man—woe be to the woman, who contracts matrimony, but under the influences of the Holy Ghost !

If there be any husbands and wives here who are strangers to the living God, let me tell you, you are a curse to each other, instead of being a blessing. May the God of all truth draw your hearts to himself !

You who know the Lord, on your knees invoke the Spirit of Christ, that you may endeavour to love each other as Christ and his church love each other in heaven. If we studiously consider the estate of matrimony, we shall discover ingredients infused into it by the hand of God himself. The relationship was intended to spiritualize the human affections, and to raise man from earth to heaven.

Husbands and wives, seek your greatest bliss in worshipping God together ; in reading God's word, and in praying to God together ; in singing his praises together ; in winging your flight together, side by side like eagles, till you arrive in the presence of God. Love (what we call love) is destined to perish ; but friendship, true friendship, is destined to live for ever, perfected in the friendship of God himself ; when you will meet each other at the bar of God, as members of Christ ; and love each other better than you have ever done in this lower world.

## SERMON XIV.

## THE TEMPTATION OF CHRIST.

HEB. ii. 18.

*For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.*

It is painful to the mind of every true Christian to witness the existence of error ; for it is dishonourable to God, and injurious to those who imbibe it. But in the midst of these things, the believer is not without direction. Truth and error are presented to him in the divine light ; the former, in all its beauty, to be esteemed and valued ; the latter, in all its deformity, to be condemned and rejected.

To know that the Saviour is perfect God and perfect man, is absolutely necessary to salvation. How far God may be pleased to neutralize the effect of error, is not for us to determine ; but one thing is certain, viz. that in leading his family to himself, he brings them from all that is erroneous in principle, as well as from every thing that is evil in practice.

*The immaculate purity of the Saviour's humanity*, is a truth so clearly revealed, that it is a wonder how the minds of any should become confused upon the subject. "Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage." (Heb. ii. 14, 15.) By the destruction of the devil, is here meant the destruction of all his machinations: and the aggravated punishment that will follow him through the endless duration of eternity:—"For verily he took not on him the nature of angels." (v. 16.) Humanity was peculiarly honoured by the Saviour: he took upon him the seed of Abraham, that he might raise the human family from the depths of their degradation to a state of perfect purity, and eventually enthrone them with himself, in the highest bliss for evermore! "Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." (v. 17.) When it is said, that God was reconciled to sinners by the sacrifice of his Son, the idea intended to be conveyed is, that the whole of his perfections were reconciled to the salvation of fallen man, by the death of Christ;



and hence it is correct to say, that God and man were reconciled to each other in Christ Jesus.—“We are made accepted in the beloved.” God was reconciled to man; or, in other words, the perfections of Deity were reconciled to his salvation, by the offering of Jesus Christ; and man is reconciled to God, by the sprinkling of the blood of that sacrifice upon the conscience, and by the renovating influences of the Holy Spirit.

In the light of Scripture, we readily discern what the humanity of the Saviour was in the earliest period of his existence. In many respects it was a perfect contrast to our own. We are imperfect beings: but mistake me not; I do not mean to assert that man, in the earliest period of infancy, is the subject of *positive* moral evil; for this is absolutely impossible. The image of God was wholly destroyed in Eden by the transgression of Adam; and the evil consequences of this descend to his posterity. Man is born into the world destitute of the image of the Almighty—destitute of any good principle; yet there is no positive moral evil in an infant. I conjure you to bear this in mind; and to study it well. The truth is not sufficiently dwelt upon at the present day.

Positive moral evil cannot inhabit the bosom of an infant: it is an impossibility in the nature of things. Give this due consideration, and you will find it to be the most obvious of all truisms.

Positive moral evil cannot find any existence in the bosom of a moral agent, but by a *wilful* act of transgression. It is an absolute impossibility that an infant, as such, should descend into hell ; for consider what hell is : it is *conscious* transgression coming in contact with the wrath of God. Now there can be no conscious transgression in the bosom of an infant. But, for argument's sake, suppose the worst ; and imagine some to be condemned. They must, first of all, wilfully and deliberately reject God ; their powers must be so fully developed, as to enable them to comprehend the rule of action, and wilfully to transgress it : if this be not the case, punishment cannot meet them. Sin must be punished *in the conscience* ; and every sinner must be made eternally conscious of his wilful transgression, or the ends of justice cannot be answered.

Yet, although infants are not the subjects of positive moral evil, they have in their bosoms that which is the parent of transgression in every finite being who is a transgressor : they bring with them into the world a principle exclusively selfish ; and exclusive selfishness in the sin of the devil fully developed. Now, though infants cannot be the subjects of positive moral evil, it is very clear that they may be the subjects of positive spiritual good. The principle of evil that inhabits their bosoms when in a state of infancy, is a principle of exclusive selfishness. Here is

a principle; but it is wholly negative. There may be positive good, as there was in the Saviour, even in the womb. It is true, it may be invisible to the eye of the finite being; but there are a number of things in existence which we cannot see. For instance, in a grain of wheat, there is a principle of life: we cannot see it; neither can we explain it; nevertheless it is there: thus it may be with infants. It is my firm belief, that all who die in a state of infancy ascend to the throne of God, where their powers are fully developed, as those of Adam were, when first called into existence; and that they are intuitively blessed by God, so as to enable them to enter *fully* into his own bliss and peace for ever and ever.

On the supposition that Adam and his posterity had persevered in a state of innocence, positive spiritual good would not have descended from parent to offspring as their *due*; but, even in that case, it would have been a superadded *sovereign blessing*. In our present state, there is nothing unworthy of our great Creator. He calls us into existence, and is, in every respect, our Creator and Preserver; and in our creation and preservation, there is nothing unworthy of himse f.

But how is original sin to be accounted for? What is sin? Sin is only the full development of an exclusively selfish principle. The real truth,

then is, that Adam, by the fall, lost the image of God, and forfeited the influences of his Holy Spirit : nevertheless, we, his family, are not born into the world, the heirs and subjects of positive moral evil ; for as Jehovah is the Creator of the body and the soul, how could he give existence to positive moral evil ? This is an impossibility.

The humanity of the Saviour was called into existence by the Divine Spirit ; and, united to Deity, immediately became, in a peculiar manner, the temple of the Holy Ghost. In this humanity, he achieved the most glorious victory. Now, if his triumph were one worthy of being celebrated, it must primarily be considered a triumph of principle ; and the triumph of principle must have been the effect and consequence of perfect purity !

Thus, what was lost in the fall of Adam was restored in Christ, in an infinitely glorious manner, in the union subsisting between his Deity and his humanity ; and in his being made the temple of the Holy Ghost. The union subsisting between his Deity and his humanity must necessarily involve the absolute purity of his finite nature. For nothing but what was absolutely pure could have been taken into personal union with the Son of God. We find him a conqueror in the womb, and sin thrown to an infinite and eternal distance from *his* human nature, that it

might, eventually, be banished to the same distance from each of his family. "To make reconciliation for the sins of the people," he threw into his sacerdotal office the whole of his humanity, in all its exquisite and lovely feelings, as well as the whole of his Deity : for both were absolutely necessary.

I. Consider, first, A SAVIOUR TEMPTED.

He voluntarily exposed himself to temptation, and this no one else could do without falling. Finite being, exclusively considered, cannot voluntarily expose itself to temptation with impunity. No angel—no saint in heaven, or in earth can do this. The command is, "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." Here the weakness of man was contemplated. The Saviour's voluntary exposure to temptation, implies the infinite dignity of his person, and the absolute purity of his human nature. Generally speaking, the wisdom of man consists in flight ; in borrowing the wings of lightning, that he may fly from every evil, and every temptation, to the greatest possible distance. But here is one who voluntarily exposed himself to temptation, proving by that exposure, that he was God as well as man. No one could do this but he who is God over all, blessed for ever ; no one could do this who had not himself wholly at his own disposal. Thus was Jesus Christ voluntarily led by the

Spirit into the wilderness: led to fight, and not only so, but led to conquer likewise.

One reason among many others that might be assigned why he voluntarily exposed himself to temptation, is, because he foresaw the issue; namely, that he should triumph most completely.

The Saviour's exposure to temptation comprises every thing. It was an exposure to every evil to which humanity could be exposed. I shall at another time allude to the power which Satan had to introduce evil into his imagination, but no further; it was there the Saviour met the enemy, and triumphed in the most glorious manner: there, in the presence of our enemies, his humanity was sublimated to the most exquisite degree of perfection; throwing all his and our enemies to the distance of infinity and eternity.

He became subject to all the evils to which any human being can be subject; and that in the most aggravated degree: he even exposed himself to contempt and persecution. And here let us take into consideration the exquisite feelings of his humanity: no one could feel these things as he felt them, for he never possessed any incorrect feeling; his feelings were perfectly pure, even the purity of Deity. So that he felt most intensely, yet bore most patiently every insult: he evinced nothing but perfect innocence during the whole tenor of his life here below.



He became subject to hunger, thirst, fatigue, sorrow, reproach, and shame : he took upon him (as I have often had occasion to observe) all the innocent imperfections of human nature ; these he possessed in common with all other creatures.

Two things rendered him capable of suffering in the most exquisite degree ; the immaculate purity of his humanity, and the union of his humanity with his deity.

His humanity was united to infinite strength, and invested with infinite purity ; therefore capable of suffering to an extent of which we cannot form any adequate idea. He was “ a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief : ” being expressly “ the seed of the woman,” he possessed feminine feelings in the greatest perfection ; which feelings were connected with the strongest and most masculine mind. It has been justly observed, that “ women have more fortitude and less courage than men ; ” however, every thing lovely and excellent in either sex was possessed by the Saviour in the most eminent degree of perfection. It was necessary that he should possess the finest feelings ; and the finest feelings must invariably be those of absolute purity, or his intellect and feelings could not fully have known and felt the evil of sin. An intellect perfectly free from moral pollution ; an intellect capable of viewing the evil of sin with the eye of



Deity, was absolutely necessary : with feelings so exquisitely pure, as to be capable of receiving into them all the energy of Deity, developing itself in communicating to him a sense of the evil of sin, and at the same time stimulating him to support the mighty weight, without contracting the least degree of impurity : observe, I am speaking of sin in its penal consequences. All that his intellect and feelings were engaged in, during his agonizing sufferings here below, was only a developement of those perfections which were hidden in the bosom of Deity from eternity in an unfathomable abyss. Thus impurity of any kind would have been an improper channel, and could not have received the perfections of Deity, so as to develope them into visible life. If you wish to exhibit the beautiful and primary colours of light, you must use a pellucid prism. The humanity of the Son of God was perfectly free from all sin and pollution ; hence the perfections of Deity evinced their beauty to us in his humanity, precisely in the same manner as a proper medium, when exposed to the sun, shews its primary colours. The Sun of Righteousness, in the sufferings of humanity, resolves all the glories of Deity—into what ? into all the beauties and excellencies of him who is light inaccessible. The perfections of God, concentrated in the faculties and feelings of the Saviour, pour forth all their reflux streams in the graces of

his humanity. God is incomprehensible to finite being. The naked eye never could have discovered the beauties of light in the sun; but by an intervening medium we become fully acquainted with them. Behold then the glory of God in the face of his Son Jesus Christ. O endearing subject! what a pity that the least confusion should exist upon it! Let me repeat the important truth; Deity, in all its richest streams, flowed into the Saviour's feelings. Impurity could not have welcomed Deity in any of his moral, or spiritual, or holy manifestations of himself.

There are some things with which we must become well acquainted, before we can fully know their good or evil; but this is not the case with sin. There is this awful peculiarity in sin, that we lose our knowledge of it, in exact proportion as we become familiar with it. He is best acquainted with the evil and the desert of sin, who is an entire stranger to its commission and its indulgence. Sin must be removed from the creature, or he can never view its evil and desert in the light of Deity! When does the believer become acquainted with the deformity of sin? When a Saviour, in all his mediatorial glory interposes and delivers him from its guilt and pollution. The humanity of the Son of God was as free from pollution as his Deity.

The Saviour was tried by evil in various ways.

He was severely tried by his relations and avowed followers, as well as assailed by his enemies, and tempted by Satan. Satan used every art to seduce him into evil; he presented him in imagery with all that was morally bad, attempting to pollute his righteous soul. He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, that he might triumph most gloriously over the subtilty, the malice, and the power of Satan.

No one ever knew the value of the creature as the Saviour did; he was thoroughly acquainted with the legitimate use of all the creatures of God, and this was never the case with any human being but himself. He who is best acquainted with the rule of action, is best acquainted with any deviation from it. The best judge of beauty is the best judge of deformity: a pure standard was erected in the intellect and in the feelings of the Saviour, moving in perfect harmony with each other, with all the rapidity of lightning. Delightful as the creature was in itself, yet he knew, that nothing was more desirable than its absence, when God forbade its presence. Consider what his sufferings were, when hunger was preying upon his vitals like a vulture. Mark the subtilty of the tempter; at that very moment he said, "Command that these stones be made bread." Who like the Saviour could enter into the feelings of an individual disposed to lay dishonest hands upon any thing that

did not belong to him? Connect this with his omniscience, and his power at that moment to have changed the stones into bread in the presence of the tempter. He could form a perfect idea of every thing that is calculated to lead man astray in the pursuit of what is good. We find him visited with his Father's vengeance, and with all the powers of darkness; and while penal evil was raging in his bosom, he was tempted by Satan to blaspheme, and distrust his God. His words at that moment are very striking: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?—I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death." (Ps. xxii. 1, 14, 15.)

Some divines have thought, that the Saviour's bodily sufferings were not so severe as the bodily sufferings of many of the martyrs; but the real truth is, there never was a body so tormented as the Saviour's: even the bodies of those who will be consigned to eternal doom in the last day will be incapable of suffering as he did, in consequence of the intimate union subsisting between his Deity and his humanity. He bore the whole weight of his Father's vengeance. Justice required this; and it is requisite that this should be borne in mind, that we may be truly grateful

to God for having redeemed us by such a sacrifice.

There was more than sympathy between the body and soul of Christ ; for the wrath of Jehovah took full possession of each. Suppose burning lead or oil, or any thing capable of inflicting the most acute pain, were to be infused into every vein of the body, this would be little, compared with the Saviour's bodily sufferings. Why ? The wrath of Jehovah flew through the whole of his body, as well as through the faculties of his immortal spirit. This was suffering that leaves every other far behind ; especially if we connect the idea that Satan, at that very moment, was attempting to seduce him into blasphemy and despair. But in the midst of all these things, he could say, "The prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me."

## II. Consider, secondly, HIS GLORIOUS TRIUMPH.

How can we sufficiently admire the love and condescension of the Saviour, who voluntarily encountered all suffering, and eventually achieved a glorious triumph for such rebellious creatures as we are. He exposed himself to every evil, that he might sympathize with, and succour us. He gave the enemy every advantage, that he might prove to us that he is fully acquainted with the weakness of our nature. No one ever learned the weakness and absolute dependence of finite being

upon infinite, like the Saviour. It was in Eden, when surrounded by every luxury that could afford delight to man, that Adam became the victim of the tempter; it was in the darkest hour, in the midst of the most severe and intense suffering, both of body and soul, and in the absence of those delights which our first parents possessed and enjoyed, that the Saviour triumphed gloriously. Yes, it was in the wilderness, without a friend, exposed to all its horrors, and while famine seemed to feast upon his vitals, that Satan was suffered to assail him. Who can feel as he felt upon the cross? Deserted by all his friends, and not only deserted by his God, but visited with all his Father's vengeance, while it flowed into his bosom as if it had been destined to be an eternal current; for he could see no end to his sufferings; he had nothing to trust to but the promise of God. But behold his glorious triumph! Some of you know what it is to be subject to the most exquisite trials, and dare not unbosom yourself to any earthly friend; approach the Saviour, unbosom yourself to him. "He was tempted in all points, like as we are, yet without sin."

### III. Consider, thirdly, THE SUCCOUR HE AFFORDS.

And what does this involve? All the glories of his Deity, as well as all the graces of his humanity. His omnipotence as God, and his love and



sympathy as man, are with his brethren every moment. This is all they stand in need of; his presence is enough, in the absence of every earthly good; yes, and frequently much sweeter in their absence, and more highly prized.

“He is able to succour them that are tempted.” When Satan was suffered to force evil upon his imagination, the Saviour became more acquainted with it, than if it had lived in his bosom. It tormented him much more than it could have done, had he been in the least degree the subject of its influence.

His omniscience as God, and his experience as man, involved every thing that he required. “Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered.” (Heb. v. 8.) We stand in need of knowing the principle of obedience, because we are naturally destitute of it: not so the Saviour; he evinced perfect conformity to the law of God in the most difficult and trying circumstances. When exposed to suffering, and even the sword of persecution, we should remember that the Saviour is present with us in all his omnipotence as God, and in all his love and sympathy as man. A consciousness of his presence will enable the believer to triumph in the midst of the deepest distress. It is then he is made sensible that all his enemies are destined to perish.

Mark the Saviour’s exquisite sympathy to the last moment of his sufferings. We are such weak



creatures, that the least degree of pain fully engages us, so that we cannot bestow any attention at all upon others : not so with the Saviour ; when in the depths of his sufferings, behold him exerting the energy of his power to raise the dying thief from the pit of everlasting destruction, to enthrone him with himself in glory for ever. Here is sympathy. Here indeed is a “ Brother born for adversity.” Trust him, O ye trembling believers, at all times, and in all places ; you will then be possessed of the happy art of living far beyond the reach of disappointment.

To conclude : expect troubles and persecutions as long as you live in this world. At the same time, we should be careful not to create them ; for we certainly do create a great number by our imprudence ; and the rods that we make for ourselves, descend with more severity than any others. Are any of you thus situated ? Remember, you have a sympathising Saviour, who, although he never did any thing evil, is nevertheless fully acquainted with the effect of evil upon the human bosom. Let the circumstances in which you are placed be ever so abject, still approach him ; he can, and will sympathise with you.

Again : flee tribulation as far as you possibly can. It is here that our conduct should form a perfect contrast with the Saviour’s. He voluntarily exposed himself to tribulation ; but it is our duty to shun it as much as possible. If, in

the providence of God, you are exposed to trials and temptations, be frequent and fervent at a throne of grace. It is God's delight thus to converse with his family. When they have forgotten him, he frequently sends one affliction after another, to bring them again to himself. He casts all their idols to the moles and the bats, that he may hear them pour forth their fervent prayers to him : and the sweetest songs that have ever been sung by the church of God, have been at a period when so circumstanced that she could not amuse herself with any idol ; when God seemed to be telling her, "Thou shalt have no companion but myself." Do we know what these tribulations are, and how to make a wise and holy use of them ? We should realize in them the voice of God inviting us to himself.

Lastly : the Lord sometimes suffers troubles and afflictions to overtake his family, in order to strengthen principle ; and they frequently come upon the believer when he cannot charge himself with being in a backsliding state. Their direct tendency then is, to ripen him for glory ; to convince him that every thing here below is insufficient to satisfy the desires of his immortal spirit. The world then appears to him but a barren wilderness in which he cannot find any solid and substantial enjoyment. The Holy Spirit then gives him a rich anticipation of that purity, peace and bliss, which in perfection are only to be

found in the presence of God. Thus the apostle says, “Brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;” and another apostle rejoiced that he was counted worthy to lose all things for the sake of Christ. It is the perfection of true religion to rejoice when affliction comes from God. The Saviour spent most of his life in sorrow, that his family might spend much of theirs in holy joy; and there is much joy to be found in the religion of Jesus: it is indeed blended with sorrow; and why? To give it the most delightful effect; as physicians often cause one drug to be mixed with another of a different description, in order to produce the most beneficial result. Thus the Lord in the dispensations of his providence often mingles prosperity and adversity, to drive his family from every refuge of lies to himself, and, by necessary consequence, to enhance their joy.

Happy mourners in Zion! who have been taught to weep over a corrupt heart, and to shed tears of penitence over past sins. The joys and consolations of true religion are at no remote distance from you.

Let it be your daily prayer that God may by all means, however afflictive to flesh and blood, detach you from every thing here below, and attach and devote you to himself, for ever and ever.

## SERMON XV.

## THE SYMPATHY OF CHRIST.

HEB. iv. 15.

*For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities ; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.*

THE apostle, in this epistle, announces to the Hebrews the dissolution of all the types and shadows of the Mosaic dispensation, and proclaims the eternal existence and triumph of the glorious realities which they once represented; viz. the atonement of the Saviour, the worship that is presented to God in him, and the future felicity of his obedient followers. “ The word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” (ver. 12.)

What can give us a more glorious view of Jesus than this? Especially when we consider that the eye of his humanity must wing its flight through our bosoms, with all the glorious attributes of his Deity. “Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do;” (verse 13;) all things in heaven, earth, and hell. They behold him in hell, but they behold him afar off. They behold him in heaven, while they bask in the sunshine of his presence. The glories that constitute heaven all flow from his countenance, and they become at one and the same moment, the occasion of all the horrors of hell. They are the *cause* of the bliss of heaven; they, in connexion with the rebellion of its woful inhabitants, are the *occasion* of the horrors of hell.

True wisdom then consists in knowing Jesus as our all in all. True wisdom consists in approaching him in spite of every opposition, internal and external.

He views all here below, not only with the eye of his justice, but likewise with the eye of his mercy. His eye penetrates the human heart to pity, and his arms are widely extended at the present moment to relieve: hear his language; “Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.” (Isa. xlv. 22.) This is the sense in which we

must apply the passage, to give it an easy and delightful connexion with the context ; for the apostle makes this use of it : “ Seeing then that we have a great High Priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.” Let us cleave to the reality, and then the profession of the reality will necessarily follow ; for “ with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” (Rom. x. 10.)

A friend of mine was telling me, not very long since, of a poor peasant girl who was at the point of death ; she was asked what she thought of Jesus. “ Jesus !” said she, “ O, I cleave to him as limpets cleave to the rock.” Excellent girl ! from my inmost soul I love thee for thine attachment to the Saviour. All the thunders of the ocean will only shield thee from thy enemies, instead of destroying thee. Cleave to Jesus, my brethren, in spite of all your enemies. Ocean with all its storms, hurling its destructive fury, cannot move thee from thy rock. Let them bring forward all the arguments and logic of hell to prevent you. Tell them at once, they are only so many reasons why you should cleave to the Saviour, and boldly confess him here below, that you may be confessed by him in the presence of God, and his holy angels in eternity. Never oppose your own unworthiness to the worth and power of Deity ; for all his perfections are en-



gaged to raise fallen man from a death of sin to a life of righteousness.

The apostle, after exhorting them to hold fast the profession of their faith, assigns another reason, the strongest that can possibly be imagined : “ For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities ; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.”

I. The first thing that naturally presents itself to our consideration is, THE DEITY OF OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST.

It is obvious, for many reasons, that finite being cannot, properly speaking, present us with a priest. All the priests under the Mosaic dispensation were only types and shadows of the Saviour Jesus Christ. He is in reality the only priest that ever lived ; the only priest earth can ever witness, or which heaven can ever see : having by his sufferings and obedience unto death fulfilled all types and shadows. Our great High Priest ran the race of glory with the feet of Deity, trampling all his and our enemies under his feet, and entered within the veil. He not only led but made the way, and removed every difficulty. Hear his own words : “ I am the way, the truth, and the life ; no man cometh unto the Father but by me.” (John xiv. 6.)

There was no access to God, no path that leads



to heaven, till it was shewn by Christ before and after his incarnation. The gates of heaven must have been closed against us for ever : our state would have been as awful as that of the fallen angels, and in some respects more awful, had not Deity in humanity, by his own obedience, created a highway from earth to heaven.

The high priest, as a type of Christ, entered into the holy of holies once every year, but none of the people followed him : this was to teach us the imperfection and absolute inefficacy of all typical institutions : but Jesus Christ, being God as well as man, hath ascended up on high and led captivity captive, that all his family might follow him, and be with him in glory for ever. “ They go from strength to strength ; every one of them in Zion appeareth before God.” (Ps.lxxxiv. 7.)

Christ is a High Priest in whom all his family are most eminently and equally interested ; fully interested in his righteousness, in his intercession, and in all he has. What a rich encouragement to approach a covenant God !

Every time we fall down and worship God, whether in public or private, we are travelling to the holy of holies above. A full consciousness of this will enable us to prosecute our journey with increasing alacrity and delight.

Messiah then was the only one that fathomed the torments due to man as a transgressor : be-

cause a divine person, he annihilated them all in his own person. Here is a mighty conqueror! O believers, you have now to fight against enemies that have not only been defeated, but are bound hand and foot by the Captain of your salvation.

Again: the creation and preservation of the least particle of matter requires the agency of divine perfections; first, to call it into existence, and subsequently to preserve it in being. This is applicable not only to the globe which we inhabit, but to all the systems of worlds that God has ever yet created. We may ascend still higher, till we arrive in the presence of the most glorious intelligences before the throne of God; and then we shall be obliged to echo the truth which the apostle teaches, that “all things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.” (John i. 3.)

The redemption, however, and salvation of fallen man, involve in them infinitely greater glories than the original creation, and subsequent preservation of angels in all their primeval innocence.

The omniscience of Deity in all its glory is absolutely necessary to redeem and to save fallen man. He who is a mediator between God and man must be omniscient: he must peruse Deity with the eye of God himself, or he could never undertake the mighty task of mediating between

an infinitely just and holy God, and fallen man. Without being fully able to peruse the glories of Deity, he could never have known the glories of the law which has been violated; and without perusing the glories of the violated law, he could never ascertain the full amount of human depravity, and its consequent misery. But Christ was set up from everlasting in the covenant of eternity, as he says of himself; and his inspired apostle tells us, “in him was life, and the life was the light of men.” (John i. 4.) Here we have the eye of Deity in all its glory, beholding the divine essence in all its excellency; and at the same time perusing humanity in all its depravity, and in all its consequent misery.

In another point of view, Deity must interpose between God and man. Infinite *worth*, as well as omniscience, is absolutely necessary to redeem and save man from the awful consequences of his transgression, and to restore him to the eternal favour and friendship of the Almighty.

Worth, absolute, independent worth, properly speaking, is not possessed by any finite being, and never will be. Finite being, therefore, cannot purchase any thing at the hands of divine justice. It is impossible. Infinite being, alone, can do this. Had the aggregate hosts of heaven presented themselves as a sacrifice for sin, their offering would have amounted to no more than that of so many bulls or goats, for this obvious

reason ; that not one of them would have possessed any thing that was not solely and exclusively due to the Creator, for, and from himself. The redemption of the soul is precious, and in the hands of finite being it must have ceased for ever. (Ps. xlix. 8.)

Oh it is wonderful, that any individual should have the temerity to deny the Deity of the Son of God : it is a doctrine of such momentous importance, that every testimony to the truth which God himself could give, has been afforded. (Matt. iii. 17 : Luke ii. 11.) Heaven, earth, and hell united in their testimony once, and once only ; and that was in proclaiming the glorious truth of the divinity of the Son of God. (Luke xxiii. 4 ; Matt. xxvii. 54 ; Matt. viii. 29.)

My brethren, let us beware of sin : there is an indissoluble connexion between error in principle and vice in practice. In the denial of the Deity of the Son of God, we have this awful truth presented to our consideration. God grant that it may be a warning to us all ! Men are led, on this side eternity, into darkness, deeper than the shades of hell itself, for no one in the regions of torment presumes to deny the deity of Christ. It is absolutely impossible ; because he lives in them, as their judge in all the terrible glories of his vengeance ; and their consciences tell them in the most dreadful pangs, that they are in the hands of the living God—that God who is a con-

suming fire. But here man denies him, and rejects his proffered mercy : may we individually acknowledge him to be a God of mercy, and experience in our own assurance, his gospel to be the power of God unto salvation.

II. In the second place, I have to consider **THE HUMANITY OF OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST**. I cannot introduce the subject with any thing more excellent than we find in the Athanasian Creed : a creed opposed by many, only because they do not understand it. If I know any thing of the revealed will of God, this creed fully and faithfully echoes its truth. I would only make one observation, which is, that none of its damnatory clauses can possibly be levelled at any of those who are desirous, honestly desirous, of knowing the truth, whatever difficulties they may experience at the present moment. “ For the right faith is, that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and man : God of the substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds ; and man, of the substance of his mother, born in the world ; perfect God, and perfect man : of a reasonable soul, and human flesh subsisting : equal to the Father, as touching his Godhead, and inferior to the Father, as touching his manhood. Who, although he be God and man, yet he is not two, but one Christ ;—one, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh ;

but by taking of the manhood into God;—one altogether, not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person: for as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ.”

One of the finest pieces of divinity that ever flowed from the pen of man !

“God of the substance of the Father, begotten before the world:” here is his Deity and essential Sonship: “and man of the substance of his mother, born in the world,” as fully of the substance of his mother as you and I are.

Scripture proves this in the clearest manner. “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same.” (Heb. ii. 14.) “Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh.” (1 Tim. iii. 16.) And how was he to have flesh, but from his mother; how else was it to be derived?

The apostle John tells us, “Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God.” (1 John iv. 2.)

It is of the utmost importance in divinity, indeed it is absolutely necessary to the peace and welfare of our immortal spirits, while strangers and pilgrims here upon earth, that we should have correct views both of the Deity and the humanity of the Son of God. That they are “one Christ,” is the glorious testimony of Scripture; and not only one Christ, but one person.



The humanity of the Saviour had never any distinct subsistence of its own ; but as the reasonable soul and body constitute one man, so God and man constitute one Christ.

In the person of the incarnate Son of God we see Deity united to the body and the soul of man ; Deity united to all the faculties of man ; Deity united to all the feelings of man's frail frame ; and, at the same time, to the immortal spirit inhabiting it.

The Deity of the Son of God, in assuming humanity into the most intimate union with himself, assumed it in the midst of all its innocent weaknesses.

It is not correct to say that he assumed "fallen humanity." Some individuals assert this, who, I believe, have no idea of derogating from the glories of the Son of the Most High, and therefore I speak of them with respectful tenderness.

The verb "to fall" signifies, in the sense most frequently used in divinity, to descend from moral purity into moral impurity. Now "fallen humanity" cannot possibly be predicated of the Son of God. I would not for countless worlds use the term ; for though I might call it sinless, it would only be a contradiction, while I should be laying a snare in which Satan might catch others less informed than myself.

Nor is it difficult to prove what I have just stated. I thank God, nothing is more easy.



The Saviour was not in the Adamic covenant. The covenant of Eden was not entered into with the woman, but with the man. The humanity of the Son of God was the only humanity not included in the covenant of Eden, and therefore the only humanity that did not fall. He was peculiarly the seed of the woman, and not descended from Adam by ordinary generation, as you and I are ; the seed of the woman and the offspring of the Holy Ghost.—The real truth is this, and may God write it in your bosoms in all the characters of eternity. Deity assumed humanity in the womb of the Virgin ; and interposed himself, in all the glory of his essential Deity, between that humanity and the fallen nature. There the link of contamination was broken ; and in consequence of this interposition, never was humanity so far from fallen nature, as the humanity of Christ. The humanity of Jesus Christ was necessarily removed to the distance of infinity and eternity from the fall of man. I conjure you, in the name of the living God, to give me an attentive ear at the present moment ; because I am laying down principles which will very easily lead us into the nature of the Saviour's sympathy.

Moreover, consider the Saviour's incarnation and his visit to this world, in another point of view. Though he was not born into this world in the wreck, if I may so express myself, of the

Adamic covenant; yet he was born under the law, violated in the transgression of that covenant; under its curse, as well as under its command; and, at the same time, at the head of a new covenant. So, though an infant of days in the arms of his mother, we behold him an infinite person, worthy of our adoration; and such the Magi of old evidently considered him. They saw his star in the east, and were guided by it into his presence, when they “fell down and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts, gold, and frankincense, and myrrh,” (Matt. ii. 11,) as typical of the spiritual homage due to the Son of God.

Let me repeat the important truth. Deity interposed between the humanity of the Son of God and the consequences of the fall. The Son of God was not born in the ruins of the covenant violated in Eden; but he was born under the law violated in the transgression of that covenant; under its curse, and under its command; and at the head of a new and infinitely more glorious covenant; new indeed to us, being given after the violation of the old; nevertheless a covenant from eternity. “Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire: mine ears hast thou opened: burnt-offering and sin-offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me: I delight

to do thy will, O my God ; yea thy law is within my heart." (Psal. xl. 6, &c.)

Flesh cannot be sinful unless it becomes the instrument of sin actuated by a corrupt principle. This never was, never could be the case, in the humanity of the Saviour.

III. I come now to consider, in the third place, THE SYMPATHY OF THIS GREAT HIGH PRIEST. I lay it down as an absolute, indispensable truth, that he was free from all moral impurity. As I have already intimated, he took upon him humanity in all its innocent weaknesses. He took it in a manner in which it was not originally conferred on Adam in Eden ; for he went through all the varied stages of infancy, youth and manhood ; he became subject to every want and suffering incident to humanity, yet wholly free from sin.

I repeat this, because some have asserted that the Saviour assumed fallen humanity, and when we ask for the proof, they reason thus ; He hungered, he thirsted, he slept, he endured fatigue, he grieved, and so on. But these are all innocent weaknesses. The fact is, that they assert one thing, and then prove another. They tell us, that he assumed fallen humanity, and then only prove that he assumed the *innocent* weaknesses of fallen humanity. Adam doubtless slept in Eden ; Adam would have been hungry

and thirsty, had he continued in Eden. He would have been necessarily imperfect, in the sense in which all created beings are, had he persevered in innocence until the present day.

O my brethren, cling to the truth, and prize it more than life itself. Jesus Christ assumed *pure* humanity, with all its *innocent weaknesses*.

It has been objected by some persons,—who consider it paradoxical, if not impossible,—that the Saviour of mankind should sympathize with the subjects of moral pollution, without himself possessing that fallen nature whence that moral impurity flows. I would affectionately address such persons. In the name of the living God, I would step between you and the brink of that precipice on which you now stand, while Satan himself is behind you, trying to push you down into the abyss below. With the arm of God himself, I would endeavour to thrust you from the brink of the awful pit.

This error, I should tell you, my young friends, proceeds, as most others do, from a reasoning spirit, altogether undisciplined and unscriptural, madly opposing itself to God and his truth. It arises, in some degree, from a misconception of the word sympathy; from a skeleton idea, if I may so express myself, of the verb “to sympathize;” a word which, in its real and legitimate sense, when applied to the Saviour, is rich and comprehensive in the extreme.

Would you, my dear young friends, confine its sense simply to feeling as another feels? Let me tell you, hell is full of such feeling; but there is no sympathy there. To account for this, I would remark, that the attributes of sin are ignorance, insensibility, and cruelty. Now I ask you, even according to your own crude ideas, is there any feeling, or fellow-feeling in these? Most assuredly not.

Again; can sinners, under the influence of sin, feel for themselves as sinners? and if they cannot feel for themselves, can they feel for others? for surely self-love takes the lead.

If you suppose that the Saviour of mankind is the subject, in the least degree, of moral depravity,—mark, my brethren!—you immediately begin to annihilate all feeling, for the reason I have already assigned, in presenting to you the attributes of sin. The essence of sympathy is absolute purity; and the necessity of this may be easily proved. Jesus sympathized: of this we have many instances on record. Now, if you make him the subject of moral evil, in the least degree, the consequences will be tremendous in the extreme: for as the humanity of the Saviour is wholly united to his Deity; if his humanity be morally polluted, his Deity must be likewise the subject of sin: the consequence is inevitable. My dear young friends, I am showing you what your system is, that you may shrink back from it

with mingled emotions of horror and gratitude ; horror at its enormity, and gratitude to God for your deliverance from it. But to go on : if, then, the Deity be polluted, he must be *wholly* polluted. He cannot be partially polluted by moral evil : he must be either wholly polluted by it, or wholly free from it.

Again ; if moral depravity be necessary to sympathize, then, to sympathize with the greatest sinner, the utmost degree of moral depravity is necessary ; so that, to make this sympathy perfect, according to such a system, the Saviour must have been guilty of every overt act of sin ever committed by human nature.

I might travel on to still more awful consequences that would follow from this error ; but I am treading so closely on the borders of blasphemy, that I must forbear.

Perfect purity is, and must be, the essence of true sympathy. We have some exquisite instances of the Saviour's sympathy recorded in Scripture. Let me begin with one that is handed down to us by the Evangelist Mark, in the third chapter of his gospel, and fifth verse : " And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand." Here are anger and love residing at the same time in one bosom. He was angry, and yet grieved. Where there is grief, there is pity ;



where there is pity, there is love. These feelings, when traced to their legitimate source, must be traced from his humanity to his deity.

Now, my young friends, reasoning on your system, if the least degree of moral depravity be necessary to sympathize, then hardness of heart was necessary in this case ; and can hardness of heart feel for hardness of heart ? Had the Saviour been under the influence of hardness of heart, could he have grieved for their hardness of heart ? No, he could not. But, with the exquisite feelings, and the love of humanity which he possessed, his bosom travelled at once into all the causes of their depravity. He knew that they had created this hardness of heart by repeated acts of transgression. He read their inmost soul with the eye of his Deity, in all the sympathy of his humanity, and therefore he was grieved for them.

Thoughtless sinners, who are travelling the broad road which leads to destruction, listen to me, while I tell you of the loveliness of that Saviour who grieved over those who were once travelling the same road in which you are ; and remember, that all the exquisite loveliness of that grief lives in his bosom at the present moment.

Take another striking instance of the sympathy and tenderness of Christ, as presented to us in the narrative of his visit to Mary and Martha, on



the death of Lazarus. (John xi.) Although he perfectly well knew the miracle he was about to perform—for he saw the triumph over death travelling on the wings of time, and could read with accuracy the joy necessarily attendant upon such a restoration—yet he wept, he sympathized. Do you think that any moral depravity could have assisted this sympathy? Had he sent one of his disciples to raise Lazarus from the dead, I question much whether he would have wept; he would have too eagerly anticipated the future joy, to have sympathized with their present short-lived grief: but the Saviour's sympathy was far more exquisite.

Again; just observe, that the very idea of the Saviour being the subject of moral impurity, annihilates his atonement.

But now, to define sympathy—and, observe, I do not take the sense of the word from lexicographers, but from the context, and from perusing the Saviour's sympathy, as recorded in the New Testament—it involves not only the idea of feeling with, but for, his family. It involves both in an equal degree. He not only sympathizes with them in all the evil to which they are exposed, but all the good to which they are heirs; all the hell which he suffered for them, (which they deserved to suffer,) and all the heaven which he has purchased for them, connected with his determination to bring them

thither, to be holy and happy with himself for ever.

The first thing to be noticed, in speaking of the Saviour's fellow-feeling with our weakness, is, his dependence on Deity. He not only was, but is on a perfect level with his brethren in this respect, and will be so for ever. He is and ever will be as low as the lowest. It is not only true that his family will be at his feet, but his humanity will be at their feet ! Can we bear the weight of this truth ? It is not too strong language. We know perfectly well that all created being is dependent : the Saviour knew this ; he delighted and triumphed in it. In this he entered richly into all the feelings of his brethren. Many of you are, I hope, conscious of your dependence on the Holy Spirit for every thing that is good. Yes ; we are dependent on God for every thing. Here the Saviour sympathizes most exquisitely with, and for, his family ; for he, as God-man, with all the authority of Deity, with all the exquisite feelings of humanity, sends his Holy Spirit to sympathize with, and in his brethren. Such as he was once on earth, such are you ; entirely, ceaselessly dependent upon God.

But his sympathy involves more than fellow-feeling ; and the reason is evident : for no one was ever so well acquainted with the dependence of finite being on God as the Saviour was. Yet, as God, he is independent of all. He is unde-

rived essential Being. O what an idea is it, that he who is the Independent should be as dependent as you and I are, and should sympathize with us in all our weakness ! What a sympathizing and almighty Friend is here ! But though independent as God, yet the humanity of the Saviour never contemplated doing any thing in its own strength. Now mark the interesting truth ; he sympathizes with us, to bring us eventually into a state of purity to sympathize with him. May we sympathize with him in delightful dependence on God !

This truth is applicable to the Saviour's humanity in heaven. It is as dependent upon God now as it ever was ; and ever will be so in this respect, to enable him to sympathize delightfully with all his brethren before the throne of God.

I would ask another question, only to prove still more clearly that absolute purity is necessary to sympathize with humanity. Who is best acquainted with the evil of a moral action ? He who is best acquainted with a rule. Who feels most deeply a deviation from a perfect rule ? He who is best acquainted with the purity of this rule ; as he who is best acquainted with the magic of harmony, must be the best judge of discord. I might illustrate it in various ways ; still we shall come to the same conclusion, viz. that perfect purity is absolutely necessary to constitute perfect sympathy.

It was in the light of his own purity, not only as God, but also as man, that the Saviour perpetually perused the delinquency of the sons of men while here below ; and this is the reason of his being “a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.”

Again ; who is the best judge of what is due to moral delinquency ? He who is the best judge of moral depravity. And who is the best judge of moral depravity ? He who is best acquainted with the obedience of the creature. So that, when we consider the obedience of the Saviour to the command and to the curse, we still find that perfect purity was absolutely necessary, and that impurity would have injured the whole.

Now take a contrast : the wicked “deviseth mischief upon his bed.” (Ps. xxxvi. 4.) Here is the wicked delighting himself with evil. Is he acquainted with the rule of action, and does he love it ? By no means. And let it be remembered that when I speak of the Saviour’s acquaintance with the rule of action, I mean to include his affections as well as his intellect, his love of the rule, as well as his knowledge of it.

Another thing that proves the absolute purity of his sympathy is, that he must feel first of all for the Divine glory, for his Father’s perfections. This is the first thing absolutely necessary, because it is that which is most excellent ; and I would here ask, could moral depravity have

assisted him in the least degree in this primary consideration of his Father's perfections? Here again we shrink back with equal horror from every idea of impurity.

The welfare of his family must necessarily be connected with this, and his feeling for them must rise in exact proportion to his purity. His feeling is pure. Could an impure feeling have any tendency to lead them to purity? Every feeling that inhabits any individual with whom we have to do, involves this in it, a desire to lead us into what they are themselves. All the Saviour's sympathy is, and ever will be, fully engaged in leading his family into what he is in himself, that he may perfect them in his love and sympathy for ever and ever.

Now let me reverse the picture, and present you with the contrast: "The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel." (Prov. xii. 10.) Have the wicked any tenderness? O yes! they are very kind and tender; but when? When they are seducing others into sin. Would you make the Saviour like such monsters as these? Yet you must do so, if you make him the subject of moral pollution.

Consider the Saviour's sympathy in another point of view.

Obedience consists in a proper use of the creatures of God, and disobedience in an abuse of them. A man is tempted to steal because he

is hungry ; and in so doing to abuse the creatures of God. Now see the Saviour of mankind, and peruse with accuracy his capability of sympathy with and for an individual under the influence of temptation, to supply an innocent want by unlawful means. “ He was led up of the Spirit into the wilderness,” (this proves his Deity ; he was led, not forced, but *led voluntarily*,) “ to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights he was afterwards an hungered.” (Matt. iv. 1, &c.) Now I ask, what have the most tender and affectionate mothers been known to do, under the inconceivable dreadful influence of hunger ? They have devoured their own offspring ; such were its bitter pangs ! These pangs of hunger the Saviour endured, yet would he receive bread at the hands of no one but his God. He saw all that was desirable in bread. He felt in the most forcible convincing manner its absolute necessity, yet the temptation to satisfy this innocent desire by unlawful means was firmly and successfully resisted. This is applicable to a variety of cases. He was so disciplined by frequent temptations, that he could analyse every feeling that could tempt to the violation of any of God’s commands, and, possessed of the omniscience of Deity, he had the profoundest insight into the workings and feelings of the human heart, enabling him on many occasions to answer them, before the tongue had



given them utterance. He could therefore duly appreciate the desirableness of all the creatures of God.

But there is an unholy and undisciplined curiosity abroad in the present day, prompting individuals to outstep revelation itself. It is in vain to tell the subjects of it that such and such objects of their unhallowed research are not clearly revealed, that it were wise to stop short, and stay a presumptuous step. On they go, heedless of consequences. I have made up my mind to say all that can be said with perfect safety upon the subject, and then to leave it.

“Tempted like as we are.” We know what the imagination is, what we have done again and again under its influence: how we have been playing with the images of evil in our own imaginations, and cherished them till they have ripened into actual transgression; but not so the meek and holy Jesus, the pictures of sin presented to his imagination by the tempter were repelled with indignation and horror. There is no improbability in supposing that the Saviour was presented by the tempter with all the evil in imagery with which he had ever triumphed over humanity. But mark the wisdom and purity of the Saviour; he repelled all: while Satan’s temptation became only a medium, in the hands of Deity, of carrying on humanity to the highest degree of perfection.



My opinion is, that the tempter had tried the Saviour most severely for forty days. We know the tempter well enough to be assured that he delights not in one species of evil only, but in all. But not one of his temptations ever could travel into the Saviour's bosom. They were beheld with the most profound abhorrence. Here is enough to account for the Saviour's sympathy on the purest principles; here is enough to encourage the weakest to approach him, conscious that he can sympathize with him in every respect, and that he sympathizes only to deliver.

I would endeavour to give you a faint illustration. Suppose an eminently pious and humane person to take up a newspaper, and read in it an account of a murder having been committed, that the murderer had carried away property to a large amount, and that no vestige of him could be traced; no one could give any account of what was become of him. The individual lays down the newspaper with the most painful feelings: he hates and abhors the crime, and yet pities the wretched murderer. Here is an idea of the Saviour's sympathy, and of the picture of evil presented to the Saviour's mind. Another, of an opposite character, takes up the same paper, and reads the same account; and what is the effect produced upon his feelings? He regrets exceedingly that he was not a participator in the crime,

that he might have shared the booty. Here is sinful feeling as opposed to sympathy.

The last thing I would mention is, that we find the most perfect sympathy in the Saviour's sufferings and death. I have already told you, and my firm belief is, that all evil, in imagery, was presented to the Saviour's imagination by the tempter. Under his Father's rod, while drinking to the dregs the cup of his vengeance, he learned the wrath that was due to sinners: here he learned what our hell was; here he learned what we can never learn. While the Father presented him with a view of moral evil in his own light, and poured into his bosom all the hell which we deserved, his intellect and his feelings were carried to the highest pitch of perfection, and both were fully engaged; both fully entered into the evil and desert of sin. Listen to what he says, "Father, forgive them." Here is a most complete triumph; one which leaves the triumphs of all others at an infinite, eternal distance.

Hear too how the Saviour speaks of the powers of darkness; "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me." There was no moral depravity; no material to work upon in him, as in us; nevertheless he was tried and tormented to the uttermost. I have no doubt that Satan infused into the Saviour's mind, as far as he possibly could, hard thoughts of his Father. Some of you complain of presumptuous thoughts

of God. Here is one who can sympathize with you, for Satan plied his imagination with them : but they never entered his heart ; for, had they been cherished in the least degree, he must have fallen. O let me entreat you to try him ; trust him in every possible case ; and be assured that your hope will not be disappointed.

Let us now wing our flight from earth to heaven : from the trials and temptations of time to the glories of eternity ; and consider our great High Priest, full of love to God and man ; connected with what is said of him in Scripture : “ He shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied ; ” yes, full of love to God and man, longing to see his family with him in heaven ; while, let it be borne in mind, that though he is not now a sufferer, he has carried with him into heaven all the exquisite feelings and sympathy which he learned in his sufferings here below. Sympathy flourishes most exquisitely in the bosom when the individual who experiences it is altogether free from pain. I would appeal to the tender feelings of a mother, when she sees her little darling crying bitterly on account of the loss of some toy. She is fully capable of entering into the child’s feelings : for she herself was once a child. She fixes her eyes upon him—her heart is with the little trouble, and measures all its bitterness : nevertheless she is in no pain—she foresees the result—she knows that it will end in this,

she will fold him in her arms, and kiss away all his grief, while he hides his head in her bosom, and embraces her with new affection and delight.

See then the nature of true religion. It is neither more nor less than sympathy with the Son of God. He sympathizes with us, to teach us to sympathize eternally with him. This is true religion, first on earth, and subsequently in heaven.

To conclude : From what I have said, learn a few valuable lessons.

First,—Conviction of sin. There is more in this than merely the knowledge which fallen spirits have of sin. They are deeply convinced of sin ; but they have no idea of the spiritual deformity of it in the sight of God : they know no hatred of it. When the Saviour, by his Spirit, convinces any soul of sin, he throws into it (if I may so speak) a spark of that fire which was kindled in his own bosom when he died on Calvary. This obliges the individual to consider, like David, against whom he primarily offends—against God : “Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight,” (Ps. li. 4,) said the Psalmist. When this is experienced on earth, it will involve a degree of sympathy with the Saviour, and lead to every thing excellent and glorious before the throne of God above.

Secondly,—Repentance for sin. This involves in it, likewise, sympathy with the Saviour: “Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law.” (Ps. cxix. 136.) This is sympathy with others; and this was the Saviour’s sympathy with sinners when here below. He sorrowed for sin, because it was committed against God, and was destructive to the human soul; passing by every earthly consideration, whether of good or evil in the sight of man. This is genuine repentance.

Thirdly,—Faith. The whole life of Christ was a life of faith, an absolute reliance on God. The life of faith involves this. He knew perfectly that every thing was provided for his triumph in the holy covenant: therefore he relied upon his Father’s promise in the darkest hour; even when all blissful communion was withheld from him; when his spiritual horizon was obscured by clouds which his eye could not penetrate. Are any of you in a night of despondency bordering on despair? Jesus can sympathize with you. The provisions of the covenant embrace the whole family of God as fully as the Son himself. Was there a provision for his triumph? There is a provision for yours likewise. Place, then, implicit reliance upon God, and imitate the Saviour, in daily waiting upon him.

Fourthly, Hope. This lived and triumphed in the Saviour’s bosom, for “He had respect unto

the recompence of reward." "Who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right-hand of the throne of God." (Heb. xii. 2.) He kept his eye fixed upon the glory which was before him; when here on earth he anticipated the glory which he is now enjoying in heaven. Hope sustained him in the midst of all.

Christ then is full of sympathy; and his Spirit descends from heaven, winged with all his love as God, and all his sympathy as man. When are we to know that we are thus blessed? When we are brought to sympathize with him.

O pity yourselves, poor thoughtless sinners; pity yourselves! Why do you not come to Jesus? I would fix my eye on every countenance before me, and tell all, without the least degree of dread or fear of error, that you are welcome to approach the Saviour. Do you feel your own indisposition to come? Pray to him to draw you. Simon Magus was commanded to pray; though we do not hear that he ever did. Many have begun to pray, hardly knowing how to pray or what to pray for: but the Saviour has heard them; and has pitied, visited, delivered, and relieved them.

Lastly. To those who are travelling towards Zion, I have one thing more to say, to give you every encouragement. I would present you with an analysis of the Saviour's feeling. Its compo-

ment parts are purity and love. The prototypes of these glories live in the attributes of Deity, in all the dimensions of infinity and eternity. These, descending in the glories of the divine essence, on the feelings of manhood, and refracted and reflected by them, present us with the beauties and excellencies of Deity, in all the exquisite feelings of the Saviour's humanity.



## SERMON XVI.

## THE NATURE AND USE OF THE LAW.

1 TIMOTHY i. 8.

*The law is good if a man use it lawfully.*

THE subject to which these words lead is extremely interesting. It becomes the young professor to consider well at the commencement of his course the difference between the gospel and the law, and how their glories are involved in each other. The apostle says, "The law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers," (ver. 9,) and so on; that is, the law is not made to *condemn* the good, but the wicked; but the law is evidently, in a most important sense, given to the good. Without the law there can be no transgression: it is equally true, that without the law there can be no obedience.

When we look around us, we see that God governs every thing by an established rule. His government enters into all the minutiae of his providence, without a single exception. He governs, as is evident both from Scripture and from sound philosophy, the rain and the light. "He gave to the sea his decree that the waters should not pass his commandment." (Prov. viii. 29.) And here we recognize the wisdom and goodness of God in binding the sea with sand. This never would have entered the mind of finite being. Who would think of confining the tempestuous billows, which seem to threaten nature with destruction? Who would think of chaining this monster in all his rage with sand? We laugh at the idea of a rope of sand; but here is a rope of sand binding round the whole earth, and successfully confining the raging monster! Learn from this a valuable lesson,—that the most contemptible means, with his blessing, will be effectual to the accomplishment of the most glorious ends.

The whole of Nature is under his control. Many scorn the idea of there not being a single atom that is not under the government of God. Now, mark the absurdity into which they run—that atom (if any such there be) which is not under the government of God, must be God! To say that there is any thing in nature not under the government of God, is deifying that

thing ; and, in reality, when man rebels against his Creator, he undeifies Deity, and deifies himself.

God gives laws to the brute creation, and we find them placed under their guidance so as to answer the ends which infinite goodness and wisdom have in view in appointing them to serve man. The brutes are all governed by the laws of nature. “Yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times ; and the turtle, and the crane, and the swallow, observe the time of their coming.” (Jer. viii. 7.)

But when we leave the government of nature where we ought to leave it, in the hands of infinite wisdom and power, and ascend to his spiritual government, there we find a striking contrast ; there we find the vast difference between created and uncreated being. It is in his holy law we peruse the perfection of God, and the imperfection and rebellion of man.

#### I. Consider, first, THE ESSENTIAL EXCELLENCY OF THE LAW OF GOD.

1. The perfection of the Legislator. “The law,” says the apostle, “is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.” (Rom. vii. 12.) Why ? Because God himself is holy, and just, and good. The law of God flows from the essential perfections of Jehovah. The law of God is not to be considered as flowing from his sove-

reignty as his mercy does ; though, without doubt, it flows from his goodness. The perfection of the Divine Being is the source whence the law flows. On the supposition of his being a legislator, no other law could have been given ; it would have been infinitely inconsistent with all the perfections of the Almighty, to have given any other law. A law that relaxed in the least degree would visit the creature with destruction. Its rigour is its kindness. Any other law would involve the obedient as well as the disobedient in misery. It is a great blessing to have correct views of the law of God—to bring the affections into such a state of discipline, as to oblige them to echo with delight and approbation the inflexible law of God.

2. The relationship subsisting between the Governor and the governed. They are all his creatures, and dependent, not only now, but for ever, on him, for every thing. This is the reason why he legislates for them ; and no other being has a right to legislate for any, except as the representative of God. Human legislation, properly carried on, is only an emanation from God. Exclusive right is to be found nowhere but in Jehovah. Kings and magistrates are raised up by God, and will be accountable to him in the last day. Why is a father a legislator in his own family ? because he is a father ? No ; but because God has invested him with that right. It is

the relationship subsisting between God and his creature, to the exclusion of every other, that gives a right to legislate. Remember this, you who are parents. In your government, you are his representatives. Be it then your wisdom and piety to endeavour to legislate as he legislates—to govern your families as Jesus Christ would have governed them, had he lived in any family, at the present day, as man.

3. Hence, the right of legislating is not *arbitrary*. It necessarily flows from that on which I have already observed: the legislative glories of God emanate from his own essential perfections. His government in equity and in justice must be what it is, it cannot be otherwise.

Consider the law of God in its *command*. It requires supreme love to God, and fraternal love to each other; each involving perfection—the whole of the heart to God; and for the best of all reasons: God is the exclusive support, life, and energy of every being, and will be so for ever. Let us suppose the command relaxed in the least degree, the creature would be immediately driven from the arms of his parent. The law requires obedience, and keeps him, while obedient, embosomed in the heart of his parent, eternally safe from every enemy. O thoughtless sinner, to quarrel with the law of God! Less rigour would have separated man

from the life and support of his existence, from his rock and refuge for ever !

Consider the command as requiring fraternal love. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Suppose this altered ; suppose man permitted to love himself a little better than his neighbour, of course the same rule would have been extended to his neighbour as well as to himself. Such a law would be pregnant with ruin to mankind. It would give birth to a thousand monsters, and consign the globe we inhabit to the flames of destruction. It is not consistent either with his glory, or our good, that the law should be altered in the least degree.

Consider the law of God in its *curse*. In this respect also it is just and good. Is it hard to suppose that the curse casts man to such a distance from God ? No ; for the curse throws the transgressor no farther from Jehovah, than he throws himself. When we consider the law, we must love it ; doubtless the Saviour loved its curse as well as its command, for he "magnified the law and made it honourable." (Isa. xlii. 21 ; Matt. v. 17.)

If the law, then, emanates from the essential perfections of God, he is obliged to visit the transgressor with his curse, unless he visits him with his mercy : and no one, I am sure, will for a moment suppose that God is obliged to have



mercy upon any being. Does the curse of God consign man to eternal destruction? Yes: and why? Because man consigns himself to eternal destruction by transgression. Does it cast him to an infinite, eternal distance from God and from hope? It does; but not till he has cast himself to the same distance from God and from hope. Could I lead you into the abyss of hell, and shew you all the terrors that consume the wicked in the vengeance of Jehovah, the justice of God would shine most conspicuously in them all.

The law of God is *immutable* and *eternal*. The law of God is, and must be the inhabitant of heaven, earth, and hell. The law of God must necessarily be in every spiritual dispensation. The law of God must necessarily be with every accountable being, whether obedient or disobedient, for ever and ever. Its command and its curse are in hell at the present moment, demanding perfection of obedience as well as perfection of suffering; but receives neither. The law of God is increasing, then, in its demands, in the regions of woe, and will continue to increase for ever. May God, of his infinite goodness and mercy, lead us rightly to consider these important truths! They are absolutely necessary to teach us first principles; and without being well acquainted with the law of God, it is impossible we can be prepared for the sweets of mercy.



Consider the law of God in what is termed *the Adamic covenant*.

It denounced death as the penalty of an infringement of its prohibition. It connected life with obedience, and death with disobedience. It put the principles of man to the test. The law was given to man as a covenant; he violated it as a covenant, and as a rule. It was a covenant, or we should not have been under that covenant; and it was right and just we should be. Is it not very hard, say some, that one transgression should throw two individuals and their whole family into eternal destruction? No: the curse only does what they do — only follows them in their transgression — only reaches them in acts of individual transgression. As we were included in the Adamic covenant, our individual delinquency must have been likewise included in the violation of that covenant. Find me an innocent man or woman; find one who has not wilfully transgressed. You try in vain. Now, where transgression is wilful, it is only what it was in Eden. All that can be said is, we have not all the advantages Adam had; but we have all that is necessary to constitute us accountable agents. Where then is the argument of those who object to the doctrine of original sin?

Consider the law of God *under the Mosaic dispensation*. Here we find the gospel; for the

Mosaic dispensation comprised not only the moral law, but the gospel, in type and figure, in the ceremonial law. We hear of a gospel preached to Abraham—was that annihilated at Sinai? By no means. Consider the law, the moral law of God, the ten commandments. The Lord says to the Israelites, “I am the Lord thy God.” I am thy covenant God. The law was given to them, first of all, to convince them of sin—to shew them that they had transgressed it. We have every reason to believe that, while in Egypt, they had in a great measure forgotten the law of God. A new edition of that law seemed to be necessary; and God himself was pleased to issue it from mount Sinai. It was given to them first of all, to shew them their departure from God: secondly, to convince them that a new covenant head and representative was to satisfy all its demands; and, thirdly, to tell them that they must be conformed to it as a rule. But more of this when I come to speak of the law as fulfilled by the Saviour.

II. Secondly, Consider THE ABUSES OF THE LAW. “The law is good, if a man use it lawfully.”

1. The law is abused and insulted by transgression. The individual who transgresses this law, in reality injures himself. “He that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul.” (Prov. viii.

36.) *This* is true wisdom, to quarrel with ourselves, who transgress this holy law; not with the law, which is so holy, just, and good. This is the reason why the devil quarrels with the law. God disposes man to quarrel with himself; carry on this quarrel to perfection, and you will have no time to quarrel with others. You will be engaged as God would have you to be, and saints and angels will look down with the highest delight and approbation.

2. The law is insulted and abused when man attempts to justify himself by it. This must arise from ignorance of two things; ignorance of himself, and ignorance of the law of God. Paul tells us of the Jews, that “they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge; for they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.” (Rom. x. 2, 3.) The whole of the ceremonial law taught man that he was to be justified by the righteousness of another—that sin was not atoned for. It proclaimed a future Messiah. The ceremonial ordinances, instituted by God in the Christian church, proclaim the triumphs of Messiah. All the Jewish ceremonies had reference to a future Messiah, who was to atone for sin. The Christian ordinances refer back to Christ, who has atoned for sin, and who is eternally triumphant. He has made “both

one," and he came that " he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross." (Eph. ii. 16.) There is now no difference—the privileges of Jew and Gentile are so incorporated and identified, as if there were but one to receive them. The law is insulted and abused, when we endeavour, in the least degree, to justify ourselves by it. Our obedience, through the countless ages of eternity—our spotless conformity to the law of God, will form no part of our justification. It is necessary that these truths should be felt. The obedience of the saints before the throne, constitutes no part of the justification of their persons: this is wholly the work of Christ. An individual is condemned by the laws of his country to suffer death for his crimes; but the King, in the exercise of his royal prerogative, is pleased to pardon him completely, and to introduce him again to all the privileges of society. Now, let us suppose, that after this he conducts himself with the greatest propriety. Does that conduct deliver him from condemnation? No; it is a blessing emanating from his deliverance. So the pure obedience of saints above, is a blessing emanating from their justification when here below. Man is justified, that he may be made obedient.

3. Lastly, the law is insulted and abused, when man not only rejects it, but also the remedy. The rejection of the gospel is the highest insult

to the law. The gospel comprises obedience to the law in every possible manner. To reject the gospel, then, is, of necessity, to reject the law in all its glories. It is insulting the mercy of God; it is insulting the law of God; it is insulting the covenant of God. O thoughtless sinners!—pause a moment—hear me, and remember the dreadful consequences which must ensue. Many—many thousands will perish everlastingly! And why? Because they reject God, and his Christ, and his gospel; and in doing so, they reject the law, in all its glories.

III. Let us now, in the third place, consider, THE USES OF THE MORAL LAW.

1. View it in the covenant of eternity, as fulfilled by Jesus Christ. He gave himself wholly to the command. You remember that, under the ancient dispensation, a red heifer, without spot or blemish, and that had never worn a yoke, was to be sacrificed for the purification of the unclean. Now Christ, as God, was not under the yoke of obedience; nevertheless, when he became the representative and surety of man, he took upon him two yokes—the iron yoke of the curse, and also the yoke of the command. It was not Deity *only*—it was not humanity *only*, that placed itself under the yoke of the command. No; it was a divine person—God and man. Deity and humanity. See the glory of the

command ! Infinity and eternity, in all their glories, pervade it. Can obedience to this command be dispensed with ? No : because we behold infinity and eternity under its yoke.

Consider again, *the curse of God* ; and the same truth is applicable. It was not Deity only—it was not humanity only, that was exposed to the curse : it was a divine person — Deity and humanity. Do not imagine I mean to insinuate that Deity could suffer : this is an absolute impossibility. But such was the union subsisting between Deity and humanity, that a divine person became subject to the curse. Here again we find Infinity and Eternity, in all their glories, so fully pervading the curse, that it is impossible for a finite being, who is a transgressor, to escape. The law includes all the perfections of God, as requiring obedience to the curse, as well as to the command. The gospel presents us with all the perfections of God, answering that demand. Who can explain this but God ? “ Who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God.” (Heb. ix. 14.) Jesus died under the law of God, as a covenant, he is eternally conformed to it as a rule. The humanity of the Son of God is subject to the law. It is said, “ In that he died, he died unto sin once ; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.” (Rom. vi. 10.) If he live to God, he must live by a rule, as well as his brethren. Here in directing the eye of faith to



Messiah, we behold all the glories of the law involved in, and involving the glories of the gospel.

2. But, secondly, Christ died to honour this law as a covenant, that he might bring his brethren into a state of perfect conformity to it, and preserve them in that state for ever. They were “predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son.” (Rom. viii. 29.) Now, the image of his Son is perfect conformity to his holy law; and this is perfect purity. See the glories of this law, in its covenant form, in the obedience of Messiah, when he satisfied it! See its glories, as an immutable rule, in the obedience of Jesus Christ, before the throne of God! And surely, if he be conformed to it, so must his brethren. What overwhelming mountains does this doctrine throw on Antinomianism! Yes, all the mountains of God. Is there an individual here, who, beneath the mask of hypocrisy, is indulging in his sins? Let me tell you, you are on the high road to destruction! The gospel is merciful, as God is merciful; but it is also holy, as God is holy; perfect as God is perfect.

Consider perfect conformity to the law of God, as a principle and blessing conferred upon us in the covenant of God: then you will see how the glories of the gospel, and the glories of the law meet, and involve each other. The gospel provides a sovereign principle—a sovereign blessing



that meets, delightfully meets, the perfection of the law. God, in the sovereignty of his gospel, in eternity, will have brought man into perfect conformity to his holy law; that sovereignty having first honoured it as a covenant, and afterwards as a rule, in the obedience of Christ. The apostle tells us of being “under the law to Christ;” (1 Cor. ix. 21;) and he speaks of weapons that are “mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong holds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” (2 Cor. x. 4, &c.) Our enemies are to be brought into captivity. How? By a rule. And what rule is that? The immutable law of God. It is not a principle of life,—*that* is in the gospel; but the law presents him with a rule of conduct, of which the principle of life delightfully lays hold. These distinctions were remarkably well understood by our excellent reformers; and therefore it is, that when the commandments are read, the response, on the part of the people, is, “Lord, have mercy upon us,”—deliver from this law, as a covenant,—“and incline our hearts to keep this law,” conform us to it, as a rule. God grant that this prayer may every sabbath-day ascend to heaven from our hearts—from broken hearts, and contrite spirits!

To conclude, let us consider the uses of the law of God.

1. One proper use of the law, is to convince us of our sin and ruin. And this is most effectually done, when the attention of the transgressor is directed to Christ. Adam violated the law as a covenant ; his sons have violated it as a rule. Christ honoured it both as a covenant and as a rule. In ancient times, when the curses of the law were proclaimed, all the people answered, " Amen ! " " True ! " " It must be so ! " " Let it be so ! " The people, in saying so, were echoing individually their own condemnation. And we must all do the same ; we must feel convicted of our guilt and repent of it here, or we shall be lost for ever.

2. To use the law as we ought, is to study it perfectly, till we are not only convinced of our own ruin, but of the necessity of being found in the righteousness of Christ, which is emphatically called an everlasting righteousness ; (Ps. cxix. 142 ;) everlasting, because Jesus, in bringing it in, opened the gates of heaven by his active obedience, closed the gates of hell by his passive obedience ; and now ever liveth above. St. Paul tells us that he counted all things but loss that he might win Christ, and be found in him, not having his own righteousness which was of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ,

the righteousness which is of God by faith. (Phil. iii. 9.)

3. To use the law as we ought is to honour Christ as a king. It is to be connected divinely and skilfully with faith in him. There is a more glorious connexion between faith and the law of God, than between the obedience of an angel and that law. Faith, justifying faith, involves in it the highest honour the law can possibly receive. In believing in Christ Jesus we honour the law as a covenant in its command, as well as in its curse; and as he died to honour it as a rule, we honour it completely. With the law as a covenant I have nothing to do, either in its command or in its curse. Jesus obeyed the one, and bore the other. When I receive him by faith as my Saviour, I honour the law more than the angels of heaven; this is the only principle which will enable the believer to honour the law of God as a rule of conduct. "In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which *worketh by love*." (Gal. v. 6.) Now this love must have its rule; and what is that rule? It is the law: "If ye love me," says our Lord, "keep my commandments." (John xiv. 15.)

4. The law then is used and honoured as it ought to be when it is *the guide of our daily conduct*, when we wish to bring ourselves, and all with whom we are connected, to be as much like it as possible." "O!" said David, "that

my ways were directed to keep thy statutes ! Then shall I not be ashamed when I have respect unto all thy commandments." (Ps. cxix. 5, 6.) I would appeal now to the consciences of all before me. Have you not destroyed your consolation and comfort again and again, by abusing the law of God ? Some of the Lord's family have paid dearly for this ; they have travelled into midnight darkness, not knowing whither they were going. Happily for them their heavenly Father followed them with his rod, and brought them back again to the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

5. The law is honoured when its perfection is kept ever in view. It is a blessing provided for the believer in the covenant, to be imparted to him by the Holy Spirit. "As for me," says the Psalmist, "I will behold thy face in righteousness ; I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness." (Ps. xvii. 15.) "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect ; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus." (Phil. iii. 12.) May this blessing, this divine privilege of perfect conformity to the law and the gospel be ours, that we may not only be conquerors, but more than conquerors, and be conscious that we are so, over all our enemies to the day of death. Amen.

## SERMON XVII.

## THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

JER. xxiii. 6.

*This is his name whereby he shall be called, The  
Lord our Righteousness.*

THE prophet dwells in this chapter in the most animated strain on the person, work, and triumph of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the blessings emanating from him to his church. The text is so eminently and so evidently applicable to our Lord, that it is impossible to mistake the sense. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth." Execute judgment and justice! Who is he that is to execute judgment and justice? let the same prophet tell us: "Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not

the rich man glory in his riches : but let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord, which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth : for in these things I delight, saith the Lord." (Jer. ix. 23, 24.) " A King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth."

In the execution of his judgment and justice, his church will be eventually and eternally saved. Her salvation will be identified with the destruction of all her enemies, and God will be eternally glorified in both. " In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely : and this is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord our righteousness." The prophet here refers to the restoration of the Jews to the favour of the living God under the influence of the Spirit of Jesus, and the text is applicable also to every individual who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is applicable to those Jews and Gentiles who will be united in one church to serve him in the beauty of holiness, when he shall reign triumphantly ; when the knowledge of his truth shall be universally diffused, and the Sun of Righteousness shall shine from east to west, from India to the Pole. " This is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness."



I. HIS PERSON is the first thing that engages our attention.

Jehovah being the incommunicable name of God, Jesus Christ was either God over all blessed for ever, or he was a deceiver. He must be one or the other. Do not suppose that I am speaking any thing disrespectful of my God. Scrutinize this truth, and you will find that I am correct. There is no alternative between exalting him infinitely above all finite being, and degrading him below the lowest inhabitant of hell.

But what does the name Jehovah imply? First, it implies independent essence. Every thing that Deity can possess. We have only to think with accuracy, and we shall arrive at this safe conclusion, that independent essence must possess infinite and eternal perfection. This ineffably glorious name necessarily excludes time, space, limit, and imperfection. In love and condescension to our weakness, the name is paraphrased in Scripture by the Holy Spirit; thus he speaks in the 139th Psalm: "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me." This proves in



the clearest manner, both omniscience, and omnipresence. Hear again, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty;" and again, connected with the worship that is due to him, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ." "The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." (Rev. i. 8; xi. 15; iv. 10, 11.)

But perhaps the most sublime description, involving a most interesting truth, is to be found in the prophet Isaiah: "Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." (Isa. lvii. 15.) The high and holy One that inhabiteth eternity inhabits the bosom of him who is of a broken and contrite spirit. The perfections he possessed infinite ages before the birth of time, he possesses at the present moment; and the perfections he must possess infinite ages after the dissolution of time, he possesses at the present period, and

these inhabit eternity which was, and is, and is to come—the Almighty.

An attentive perusal of Scripture would soon lead us into the bosom of this invaluable truth, that Jehovah is the angel of the covenant, or, perhaps, more properly translated, the angel Jehovah himself, who was worshipped under the Old Testament dispensation. He was then Mediator between God and man, but his offices were not all fulfilled even when he completed his work here below; for when he led captivity captive, he began that work before the throne of God, of which he will never make an end till the last of his ransomed ones is united to him in glory.

2. As the name Jehovah involves in it independent essence, it must necessarily imply, *the parentage and preservation of universal being*. Scripture tells us, that Jesus Christ created all things, and that by him all things consist. “Thus saith the Lord, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb; I am the Lord that maketh all things, that stretcheth forth the heavens alone, that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself.” (Isa. xlv. 24.) The Lord Redeemer! who is the Redeemer of his church? the Lord, the holy One of Israel. Compare this with what the apostle tells us of the Lord Jesus Christ, “For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things.” (Rom. xi. 36.)

3. The name Jehovah, implies thirdly, the

fulfilment of his covenant, his promise, and his oath. God is such a perfect being, that the failure of his purposes is an impossibility. His name, Jehovah, implies independent essence, which must be always beyond the reach of every difficulty; and when he fulfils his promise and oath, he only presents himself in his name, Jehovah, to his people. Has he promised? It is sufficient. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." None of his servants ever adopted such language. But why does Jesus say, "My words shall not pass away?" Because he is "God over all blessed for evermore."

In the sixth chapter of Exodus, the Lord thus addresses Moses: "I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name Jehovah was I not known to them." (Exod. vi. 3.) Though he was not known to these patriarchs as JEHOVAH in the fulfilment of his promise, yet Moses must have witnessed the fulfilment of many of the promises made to them.

Peruse the song of Moses on the banks of the Red sea, "Jehovah is a man of war: Jehovah is his name;—thy right hand, O Jehovah, is become glorious in power: thy right hand, O Jehovah, hath dashed in pieces the enemy." (Exod. xv. 3, 6.) Who is he? The angel Jehovah, in whom alone the Lord makes himself known to ruined

man, before as well as after the incarnation of his Son : I am God, he says to the prophet, I have spoken, I will also bring it to pass : I have purposed it, and I will do it,—and why ? He assigns the reason, because his name is Jehovah.

II. The second thing to be considered, is HIS WORK.

When we look abroad and consider what God has created, wonders present themselves continually to our view. All the discoveries of modern science do but make manifest the ignorance of man. New wonders are presented to us, not only in contemplating distant worlds, but in examining the minutest works of God. But all these things are as much eclipsed by the glorious work in which he was engaged here on earth, as the moon and stars are overpowered by the presence of the sun. We behold in Jesus all the wonders of the moral perfections of God ; and though his obedience to death here below involved a glory infinitely greater than the work of creation, and subsequent preservation, yet it presents us with truth so plain, so palpable, and so easy, that it may be understood by the unlettered peasant with as much ease, as by the man of learning and science. The obedience of a divine person is the wonder of heaven, and ever will be. In this every thing else is lost. It is surprising to read the history of converts in the Old and New

Testament : some of the most depraved of mankind were changed into the image of the living God by his Spirit. But these wonders are lost in the obedience unto death of the Lord Jesus Christ. Then let not any living despair of salvation. If the whole race of Adam were before me, I would tell them that the work of Jesus is enough to save them all ; and yet not more than enough to save a single individual. The light and heat of the sun are sufficient for all the inhabitants of this globe, and for ripening all the fruits of the earth ; but the same sun is absolutely necessary for each individual, for each garden, and for each plant. And thus it is with the Sun of Righteousness. If all the countless millions of mankind were to repent and believe on him, his righteousness is sufficient for all, and he would receive all. His covenant excludes none, exclusion is the work of the creature : remember, I conjure you in the name of the living God, that reprobation is the child, and not the parent, of sin.

“The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” The power of God was wonderfully displayed in creation ; but in visiting this earth in our nature, we find the volume of eternity opened before us ; its leaves are the perfections of God in all their beauty—the bosom of Deity was

thrown open to the eye of man when Messiah became incarnate. His obedience began in earliest infancy, and it was the obedience of a divine person. We are to consider him as the head and representative of the sinner in the first period of his existence. Sin was imputed to him. The law required perfection of principle, while it suspended the curse over his head, and demanded ample justice at his hands. In the light of this truth dwelling on the person and work of Messiah, we peruse the awfully helpless state of man, banished from God by all the perfections of Deity, and willingly banishing himself with all the energies he possesses. All that lives in the bosom of an absolute Deity, and all that inhabits the bosom of the transgressor, have an immediate tendency, not only to separate them from each other, but to keep and multiply that distance throughout the countless ages of eternity. It is not necessary that I should travel to the planets to ascertain the existence of light there. I see the sun, and am satisfied that all our planetary system derives light and heat from his rays. So also it is not necessary that I should ascend to heaven, to believe in the ineffable and holy joys of the blessed; it is perfectly unnecessary also, that I should descend into hell, to witness the torments of the damned. I learn all at once, by fixing the eye of faith on Messiah.

When the fulness of the time was come, God



sent forth his Son into the world, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. (Gal. iv. 4.) This is the testimony of Scripture, and there are two things mutually involving each other in the obedience of Messiah on earth. He presented his Father with a sacrifice, and his church with a righteousness. The one as glorious as the other. It is astonishing when we view the prodigal returning home to his Father's house. The honour put upon him is surprising—an honour involving all the glory of the head of the family. It is no wonder that there was music and dancing.

The prophet Daniel says of Messiah, that he was “to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness.” (Ch. ix. 24.) Now to suppose that a finite being can bring in everlasting righteousness, and make an end of sins, is one of the most blasphemous thoughts that ever entered the heart of man. Who can do either? No one who is inferior to a divine and eternal person. Indeed, one cannot be done without the other. Who can annihilate sin? An eternal person who brings in an everlasting righteousness, because he annihilated sin imputed to him in his own person. Again the apostle says, “He was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.” (Rom. iv. 25.) But we hear this truth dwelt upon by the Saviour himself in a peculiarly



interesting manner. Bear this important fact in mind, that he is speaking as the head and representative of his church, his church being one with himself: "Who will contend with me? let us stand together: who is mine adversary? let him come near to me. Behold, the Lord God will help me; who is he that shall condemn me? lo, they all shall wax old as a garment; the moth shall eat them up." (Isa. l. 8, 9.) The inevitable consequence of this is, that the acquittal of Jesus involves in it the acquittal of his church; and he who believes this truth, is as fully justified from all things, as Messiah himself. Why was an everlasting righteousness brought in? That we might be justified eternally.

### III. I would in the third place consider HIS NAME.

Jehovah our Righteousness. Jehovah indicates properly his own righteousness; but Jehovah *our* Righteousness is his name, indicative of the union subsisting between himself and his church. Who would have supposed, had it not been proved in the clearest manner, that they who deserved the lowest place of degradation, should have been thus exalted?

The union between Christ and his church is dwelt on in scripture in a very interesting manner. It is sometimes represented as a parental union, at other times under the similitude of a

marriage. “Thy Maker is thy husband. The Lord of Hosts is his name.” (Isa. liv. 5.) Messiah himself addressing his church says: “I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness.” (Hos. ii. 19, 20.) A woman when she marries, loses her maiden name for ever. She assumes the name of her husband, and, in connexion with this, participates in his rank and honours. To spiritualize this, our name perishes when we are united to Christ: the name *ungodly* is blotted out. And what is the new name? “The Lord our Righteousness.” I should not be justified in calling the individual who possessed one spark of love to God in his bosom, an ungodly person; that name is gone for ever—the name of God is the believer’s name, in which he is to participate in the honour and bliss of his God. To carry on the scriptural allegory, the wife of the Lamb will participate in his honour for ever, and bear his name through the countless ages of eternity.

From what I have said, learn a few lessons. 1. First, our own condemnation is here set before us in the strongest light. Nothing shews us the evil of sin, nothing unfolds the state of man, and the perils to which he is exposed, like Messiah in his person and work: all must be condemned for ever, who are not interested in him. Let us

suppose the contrary, to meet the modern monster, that calls himself by an awful misnomer, Charity. Let us suppose an individual saved without Jesus Christ. God would, by such an act, proclaim to all heaven, and to universal being, that the sacrifice of Christ was unnecessary. This charity falsely so called, has more of hell than heaven in its womb.

2. The manner in which we receive the blessing forces itself upon our attention: we receive it by faith in Jesus Christ. God does not justify as an absolute being, but as a moral governor. His sovereignty cannot be exercised at the expense of his moral government. Does God justify as a sovereign? Why does he command faith? because he cannot cease to be a moral governor. It is by faith we receive the blessing, and continue to receive it through life.

3. It is in union with Christ, and in his righteousness, that the Holy Spirit begins and carries on the work of internal righteousness. It would be infinitely unworthy of God, to forgive a transgressor, without creating him anew: but when we behold him united to Christ, and clothed in his righteousness, we see every thing worthy of God. The believer is tempted to doubt this, and sometimes he is filled with fear; but there is a vast difference between the tremor of one whose feet are on a rock, and another, who treads a quicksand; the child of God looks

back on seasons when he enjoyed delightful communion with his Father, but now he is tempted to think it was a delusion. His passions rise within, and threaten him with eternal destruction. Who can describe the agonies of such an individual, but one who has experienced it? And has the minister of God nothing to say to him? I may probably reach the case of some one here this morning. I would ask you this question. Is *every* enemy alive within your bosom? Yes, you reply. Think again; all appear to be alive, threatening you with destruction, but where is self-importance? This is no more. Here then is an earnest that every other enemy shall fall. Nothing but the power of God can give pride its death-blow, and in that every other enemy will receive a mortal wound. See the wisdom and love of God, in introducing a schism into the body of sin, and enticing our enemies to quarrel with, and destroy themselves. The purpose of God is to make his child perfect in humility. May we be ambitious of being possessed of this spirit, to receive every blessing fully and freely at his hands.

## SERMON XVIII.

## THE DELIVERER.

ISA. xix. 20.

*They shall cry unto the Lord because of the oppressors, and he shall send them a saviour, and a great one, and he shall deliver them.*

WE read in the preceding verses, “ In that day shall five cities in the land of Egypt speak the language of Canaan, and swear to the Lord of hosts; one shall be called, The city of destruction. In that day there shall be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof to the Lord. And it shall be for a sign and for a witness unto the Lord of hosts in the land of Egypt.” “ An altar to the Lord, and a pillar :”—terms borrowed from the Jewish ritual or history, descriptive of the gospel blessing which Jew and Gentile were to possess and enjoy. “ A sign and a witness,” more glorious in the gospel than it ever was be-

fore. The holy lives of professors of the religion of Jesus present mankind with the greatest and most glorious sign they can ever see. Had I been present with Joshua, when he commanded the sun to stand still ;—with Moses, when he divided the Red sea, and the children of Israel passed through ;—had I been present with Christ, when he raised the dead to life, gave eyes to the blind, ears to the deaf, and feet to the lame ; I should have beheld less glorious signs than that which is to be found in the *holy* life of one who has given his heart to God. All believers are destined to be signs and wonders.

Remember, ye who profess the religion of Jesus Christ, that all in heaven are fixing their eyes upon you. Court the presence and the eye of God perpetually, in private as well as in public, and then you will delight to be visited with the eye of every other being. Court the eye of God ; and in some respect or other, the eye even of Satan will emanate in a blessing. O God, bless us individually with this disposition, that as Christ is our representative in heaven, so we may be his representatives here on earth ; that we may shew our fellow-creatures, that we are engaged in thy service, and be far greater wonders than all the miracles that have been ever wrought.

“ They shall cry unto the Lord, because of the oppressors,” &c. We are all naturally the slaves of one arch tyrant, sin. Deliverance from this will



deliver us eternally from every other enemy. If we live and die in vassalage to this tyrant, we shall be the slaves of all other tyrants; we shall be trampled under foot eternally by devils, and be obliged to trample each other under foot for ever. How awful the state of an individual who leaves this earth without being reconciled to the living God!

I solicit your attention to the following points:

I. THAT BOTH JEWS AND GENTILES ARE GREAT SINNERS.

We very frequently hear of little sins; but sin is a monster that excludes littleness. You may as well attempt to involve littleness in Deity as in sin. Every sin is a rejection of infinite good; how then can it be little? Professors of religion! be on your guard against little sins, as they are called—they are the pillars of hell. Could we ask the inhabitants of that region of woe, ‘What brought you to this place of torment?’ the answer of many would be, ‘Had we been on our guard against little sins, we had not been here.’ Sin is a great evil at all times, and in all places. There was a time when sin originated in heaven, it has since appeared upon earth. Look at its progeny! Could such a monster be little at any time? O no! In the light of absolute justice, the least sin destroys the soul for ever! Is hell a little evil? It is the offspring of



sin ! We never knew a parent give birth to any thing greater than itself ; but sin gives birth ceaselessly to eternal death ! What we stand in need of is this : to view sin in the light in which God views it : to think of sin as Messiah thought of it when he sojourned upon this earth :—to think of sin in one respect as the inhabitants of hell think of it, and yet in another to form far more correct views of its evil and desert :—to think of sin as all the hosts of heaven think of it at the present moment. If all mankind were to think of sin as God thinks of it, the earth would be changed into a heaven ; they could not live one single moment without a Saviour ! Hear what God says : “ The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. Who can know it ? I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.” (Jer. xvii. 9, 10.) Hear again : “ The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.” Here is the parent of sin. Is not the fool an atheist ? I am fully justified in using the language which now flows from my lips, although I have been censured by some for what I have said. Is there such a one in this assembly ? Have we not individually been such ? Has not this been the language of our hearts again and again ? The God we adored, if adoration it may be called, was a being like ourselves ; we invested him (as the heathens of

old did their gods and goddesses) with our own attributes. We do not believe in the existence of the true God, till under the influence of his Holy Spirit. "The Lord looked down from heaven," and what did he behold? One good individual? No, "They are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one." (Ps. xiv. 1—3.)

There is such evil in sin, that no being but the Infinite can enter into the full calculation of it: this may be seen by considering,

1. Against whom it is committed. It is transgression against God. Every sin we commit is primarily committed against the Almighty. We frequently take great offence at each other for mere trifles; let us live in the habit of invariably contemplating whatever offence we may experience at the hands of our fellow-creatures, as primarily offered to God, who will take care either to punish in due time, or to forgive. Leave all, then, in the hands of God: "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." (Rom. xii. 19.) We hear it said of the drunkard, who is a slave to his appetite, travelling rapidly to eternal ruin, and murdering his body as well as his soul by intemperance, that 'he is a good-natured man, he injures no one but himself.' My brethren, sin is an insult to universal being! Would you learn to be correct in every other calculation, calculate with accuracy the evil of sin.

2. Sin shews its malignity in exact proportion as God unfolds his beauty and excellency. We do not much wonder that God is hated by devils and lost spirits in hell, when his vengeance is in ceaseless and eternal pursuit of his foes ; but it is not in hell that we behold sin in all its deformity ; it is on earth alone, that we can take its full dimensions. There are many sins committed on earth which cannot be committed in hell. No promise travels into hell—no minister of the gospel speeds his way there ! A God of mercy is not rejected there ; but on earth, he is spurned and rejected in all the loveliness of his attributes.

3. The crucifixion of Christ especially shews the evil of sin, and proves what I have insisted upon again and again, that man is a deicide, and a homicide, as well as a suicide. They crucified the Lord of glory ; and why did they crucify him ? Because he was infinitely superior to themselves : the beauty and excellency of his perfections elicited all their hatred ; and when we take into consideration, that all the perfections of his Deity involved themselves in the graces of his humanity, we see how sin blinded the intellect and hardened the heart of man. Take a view of this subject in the light of contrast : angels beheld him with new delight, they revered and worshipped him with more profound adoration than even when they followed him

from heaven to earth. When the hosts of heaven were worshipping the babe of Bethlehem, and watching him undoubtedly with new intenseness, and increasing delight, and when their wonder had ascended to the highest pitch of astonishment—when they beheld him overshadowed with the darkness of that vengeance we had deserved; it was then that man hated him! And we carry the same principle within us at the present day; if there be a difference, we are ceaselessly indebted to the grace of God. But, remember, sin is not yet dead; the monster is not only alive in your bosoms and in mine, but so strong within us, that no one can controul him for a single moment of time, but that God who is Almighty.

We are now to consider,

II. SIN IN ITS DESERT, AS WELL AS IN ITS EVIL. Poor, thoughtless sinners! They will tell you, that they are all going to heaven: but when an individual travels from one country to another, does he not carry his disposition with him? He does, and must: it is a part of the man, and whether it be good or evil, it attends him wherever he goes; thus it is when he travels from time into eternity, he carries with him one and the same disposition. If it be still a rejection of God, hell unfolds his guilt. How awful the condition of that man, who leaves this earth in a state of enmity

to God ! If the disposition be evil, hell involves him in all its horrors ! I tremble while speaking of the evil of sin and its desert. Nothing but a consciousness of my duty to God and man could prompt me to dwell on it ; but it is necessary—“ By the terrors of the Lord we persuade men.” It is a minister’s awful province to shake thoughtless sinners, as it were, over the pit of everlasting destruction—it is a minister’s delightful province to wing his flight to the gates of heaven, with the transgressor in his arms, and shew to him the glories of the invisible world ! I have sometimes been charged with Arminianism ; my brethren, man is and ever must be, an accountable being ; the secret purposes of the Almighty, be they what they may, can never drive any one into sin, and consequently into destruction. O no ; the gospel invites all sinners to God in Christ ; and the blessings of his salvation, comprising in them all the glories of heaven, are proffered to every soul that hears the gospel.

Destruction is the exclusive work of men and devils ; properly speaking, God has nothing to do with it. Some persons dream of a period, when the torments of hell are to expire—I call them dreamers, to apply the tenderest name I can. It is a dream—a most awfully delusive one. Now follow me : sin is to be considered in a two-fold point of view ; not only as an act, but as a

principle likewise. Wherever actual transgression has appeared, it has given birth to an *eternal* principle of sinning, or rather to an eternal developement of the evil principle. Sin, the moment it first appeared, gave birth to a thousand monsters, each more formidable than itself. Who can describe it? Hell is not to be separated from sin and the sinner; it is a ceaseless developement of sin. Sin is ever giving birth to hell; it continues to do so at the present moment, and will do so for ever. Thoughtless sinners, hear me; and may God give me ears to hear myself too! Could we separate sin and hell—could we annihilate sin, there would be something in the argument; but till this is done, never, never dream of a period being put to eternal torment!

We have a great many professors of religion in the day in which we live; may you and I well examine ourselves—may we be divers in search of those pearls, which are to enrich and adorn us for ever; we shall then be really religious, and be daily learning more and more of the evil and desert of sin. Tell me what an individual thinks of the evil and desert of sin; give me the language of his heart, not something which may flow thoughtlessly from his lips—let me know what his views of sin as a principle are, and I do not hesitate to declare, that I will immediately give you the dimensions of his religion.



III. I shall point out some of THE ATTRIBUTES OF PRAYER ; “They shall cry unto the Lord because of the oppressors, and he shall send them a Saviour, and a great one, and he shall deliver them.” When the Lord first convinces of sin, he makes the transgressor conscious of the evil that inhabits his bosom. He then knows what the oppressor is ; give him the universe, the sun, moon, and stars—give him all these, and you cannot satisfy him ; he must have an omnipotent Saviour. The tendency and effect of sin, its guilt, pollution, and tyranny, are necessarily and ceaselessly to harden the heart of the sinner. Are you acquainted with the inmates of your own bosom ? They are very numerous, and very powerful. O my young friends, reflect on these things ; and consider that when countless millions of ages shall have elapsed, you will be the inhabitants either of heaven or of hell.

Three things are involved in the cry that brings Messiah, with all his glory as a Saviour, from heaven to earth.

The first, is a consciousness of the evil and desert of sin.

The second, is hope in the mercy of God – hope as exhibited in the Old and New Testament.

The third, is perseverance in prayer.

Remember what Jacob said, “I will not let thee go except thou bless me.” This ought to be the language of every believer ; he will not be

silent, till he is heard. The prayer I am speaking of, brings God to bless his child with the consciousness of the evil and desert of sin.

Now, brethren, may God of his infinite goodness and mercy, dispose you and me to examine ourselves individually. Do we really pray in the closet and in the family? What says conscience? I need not tell you, that the prayer of the lips only never yet ascended to heaven. But the cry of the oppressed heart will assuredly reach the ear of God. Do we feel sin a burden? Are we convinced that we deserve hell and condemnation? Are we convinced of the evil and desert of sin? Do we hope in God's mercy, believe his truth, and thus fly to heaven on the wings of prayer? Then there is peace in the conscience more or less, and Messiah is in the human heart to deliver, as he was of old in the land of Egypt.

The apostle Paul had been engaged in the form of prayer for a long time, but his prayers never entered heaven till after he had been convinced of sin, when he met Jesus of Nazareth, as he journeyed to Damascus; he then began to pray, and it was said of him, "Behold he prayeth." Let me encourage you then to pray—present all your enemies to God. 'My heart is so full of evil thoughts, how can I cry to the Lord?' The individual who experiences this, especially if he has weak nerves, may imagine that destruction

is overwhelming him ; but his prayer will ascend to heaven ; “ They shall cry unto the Lord because of the oppressors, and he shall send them a Saviour, and a great one, and he shall deliver them.” The promise is to him, and let him derive a lesson of true wisdom from the consciousness of his own weakness. The strength of God is destined to be made eternally perfect in him : Messiah descends and saves at the present day ; he will save Jew and Gentile, all who call upon him, without exception. May we all pray in reality, and continue praying till we shall be obliged to praise ; the oppressors will then take flight, and Messiah be in the centre of the bosom of his child.

IV. This leads me to speak of “ THE GREAT SAVIOUR.” Why is he great ? Because sin is great. The Socinians are very, very little sinners in their own estimation, and therefore they undeify the Son of God, and make a very little Saviour suffice ; but he will avail them nothing ; he has been insulted long enough ; the time will shortly come, when he “ will avenge him of his enemies,” and separate them from his friends for ever. Now listen to me, while I read a passage of scripture to give you some idea of the greatness and glory of Messiah ; “ For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given : and the government shall be upon his shoulder : and his name shall be

called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." (Isaiah ix. 6.) Here is a great Saviour.

1. His greatness knows no ancestry—he called the universe into existence—he is independent : he who is independent, must be infinite—he who is infinite, must be eternal.

2. The greatness of the Saviour is shown in this : he is the parent of all greatness, wherever found. Compared, or rather contrasted with the greatness of Messiah, all the worlds he has ever called into existence sink into less than nothing, the comparison vanishes immediately.

3. The Saviour is great in every respect. We are sometimes astonished at the successful efforts of the human intellect : but what is all intellectual greatness, even if we ascend from earth to heaven, contrasted with the greatness of Messiah ? It is less than the evanescent spark compared with the sun in his noon-day splendour ; indeed, his greatness exceeds all comparison ! Messiah is great in every respect. Examine each particle of matter through the microscope ; with it we discover many living things which elude all the acuteness of the naked eye. We behold Messiah incomprehensibly great even in these things. In this point of view no one is great but God. The creature is little in little things ; but here is one who is great in every thing—great in the sun, moon, and stars—great at all times, in all places,

in all things. O may we know him in all his greatness ! Hear me, ye inhabitants of heaven, and wonder and adore ; and may God give us, though here below, a portion of your bliss ! What do you know of his greatness ? Methinks I hear all the hosts of heaven, without one dissentient voice, exclaim, “ He is yours in all his greatness ! He gave himself in all his greatness to redeem, deliver, and save *you* ! ” We see therefore,

4. His greatness in the redemption and salvation of his people. “ Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah ?— Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat ? ” My Jewish friends, behold your Messiah returning from the field of battle ! He had indeed many and mighty enemies to contend with, but he slew them all ! “ I have trodden the winepress alone ; and of the people there was none with me : for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury ; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. ” Hear again : “ The day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come. ” (Isa. lxiii. 1—4.) Is your year, my Jewish friends, come ? Yes, it is ; enlightened by his Holy Spirit, you begin to behold the beauties, and to admire the glories of Messiah. Persevere ; this is only the prelude of a future harvest. May we look forward with

delight to the period when they will assist in carrying his glories round the habitable globe ! Messiah gives himself to his people—he himself is in them. He is not only with them in heaven, but he is with those who are on earth at the present moment : “I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one ; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.” (John xvii. 23.) Jesus, in all his greatness, in all his salvation ; Jesus, in all his mediatorial glory ;—here is a great Saviour !—and nothing less can save a single soul, while in him there is enough for all, and those the vilest.

To conclude. In the first place, make religion your *chief concern*. God intended that you should consult him in all things. Is it possible to make him a secondary object ? If a peer or a prince were to enter your apartment, you would not give him an inferior place ; and will God occupy a secondary place in the human bosom ? O no ; then give him the first place. Welcome him to his throne in the heart.

And you who are engaged in business of any kind, hear me ! Carry your God into the heart and soul of your business. If all were to do this, we should not hear of so many bankruptcies. The presence of God, and his holy religion, keeps the heart whole ; it keeps the house whole ; it keeps a firm together ; it keeps every



thing together ; while the blessing of God ceaselessly descends, like the dew of heaven, by night as well as by day. “ Except the Lord build the house, their labour is but lost that build it.” (Ps. cxxvii. 1.)

In the second place ; if you would enter into the spirit of true religion ; if you would know this Saviour fully, make religion your *ceaseless concern* ; be engaged with God every moment, every instant of time ; so that your minds may be engaged with God, even when you may imagine that you have forgotten him. Some things fix the attention profoundly, and wholly engross it ; but does this prove that God is not with us ? O no ! Look at the lover ; when he is busily employed though he be not thinking of the object of his affections, place her before him ;—or if he be occupied in business, introduce her name,—the heart is ever ready to welcome the object of its affection.—So will your heart be, in the midst of every earthly career, if truly imbued with the love of God.

In the third place, to bring the principle of integrity to the test. Do you make religion the *sole pleasure* of your life ? If you do, you will be disposed to weep over your fellow-creatures, some of whom are running to horse-races, some to balls, plays, and card-parties. Is it so with you ? The language of the believer is, ‘ Such places are full of hell to me, I cannot bear them ; my

pleasure is in conversing with my God.' Many of your hearts have, I hope, been flying to heaven since I began my sermon. Whilst you are hungering and thirsting after righteousness, till you shall be eventually and for ever filled with all the fulness of God, you will pity those thousands and millions of your fellow-creatures who are crossing the threshold of hell perpetually. "Rivers of water run down mine eyes, because men keep not thy law." We shed tears when the bodies of our relatives and friends are consigned to the grave ; but do we know what it is to weep over our fellow-creatures who are consigning themselves to hell ? May we be delightfully engaged in serving God, and praying for them while we live !

## SERMON XIX.

## UNION WITH CHRIST.

1 COR. vi. 17.

*He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.*

THE apostle is here warning the Corinthians against a sin of a most awful character. This will appear, if we consider it, in the first place, as an offence against the God of heaven ; if we afterwards view its awful consequences in time ; and, lastly, if we pursue it to the depths of hell. He is warning them against fornication ; and this he does in a manner calculated to reach the dying sparks of grace in the bosom of every one who peruses his epistle. “ What ? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own ? For ye are bought with a price : therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.”

Young men, especially you who profess the

religion of Jesus Christ, let me, most affectionately, warn you against the many temptations to which you are exposed in this metropolis. Be truly wise ; let your prayers ascend to heaven, daily, that the God of all mercy and strength would be pleased to preserve you. And be careful to keep yourselves at the remotest distance from evil ; avoiding not only all intemperance, but every thing that has a tendency to inflame the evil passions that inhabit your bosoms.

The Christian religion has done much for woman ; it has raised her from the degradation in which the ignorance of heathenism had placed her. Let it have its full influence in establishing that delicacy which is not less lovely in your sex, and which God intended to live, in all its divine vigour, in the bosom of man. And you, who are fathers—I charge you, in the name of the living God, to teach your sons true delicacy. You know not what a blessing your instructions may prove to society, in counteracting one of the greatest enemies of the Christian ; one that has buried its millions (many of them professors of religion) in the depths of hell. Let me faithfully echo the apostle's warning : “ Flee fornication ! ” flee from it, my brethren, and you will escape. You profess to be members of Christ—to be united to him. Be frequent at a throne of grace, that principle may be duly and daily strengthened : and may God, of his infinite goodness, bless you with consistency in your conduct.

“He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit.” Who is this Lord, to whom the believer is joined? He must necessarily be the Lord of lords, the King of kings. No one but the Infinite and Eternal could descend into the wreck of humanity, inspire it with his own life, and in and with that, triumph over all the opposition of earth and hell. He unites and preserves in himself, here and for ever. Our human head was a brittle one indeed—our divine head is mighty—mightier to save, than we are to destroy. We are, all of us, united either to the first or to the second Adam: the important question we ought to ask ourselves individually is, to which am I united?

#### I. CONSIDER WHAT THIS UNION IS.

1. It is incomprehensible. Many are disposed to quarrel with the doctrines of our holy religion, because there are mysteries in them; but how unreasonable is this! Are there not mysteries in every thing? Do we not find them in ourselves, and behold them in all around us? Are there not mysteries in every atom of the universe, which we cannot comprehend? It is impossible that we should have a religion without mysteries. The philosopher points out second causes; the divine immediately bounds over them all, and ascends to the first cause. What is this throughout nature? It is neither more nor less than the influence of

the Spirit of the living God upon inanimate matter. Is it necessary, that the Spirit of God should cement the planet we inhabit, to preserve it from falling to pieces every moment? And is not a mightier influence requisite to raise and preserve for ever, from among the fallen race of Adam, a new family in union and communion with himself?

2. This union is supernatural: it proceeds wholly and exclusively from God; he is the author and preserver of it. "Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." (1 Cor. i. 30.) The religion of a believer has its life in union with Christ, it can subsist nowhere else; it is supernatural, from first to last: its strength must perpetually flow from the energy of the Divine Being. It not only lives in God, but on God, on all the perfections of God. It is far richer in its sources, and in its streams, than the religion of angels; it is attended with more glories than the worship of those intelligences before the throne of God, who never transgressed his holy law.

3. It is more honourable, infinitely more honourable, than any other union. Consider the natural distance of the parties. Infinity and eternity rise between them like the everlasting hills. But humanity being first united to Deity in Christ, the brethren of Christ are united to



him in all the merits of his obedience unto death. We hear of high and honourable alliances among our fellow creatures ; but all sink into nothing, when contrasted with the alliance of the church with Christ.

Properly speaking, we are more nearly allied to evil than to good, in every earthly relation. In being united to Christ, we are allied to every good, that we may be eventually and for ever detached from all evil. We may form some faint idea of the relationship subsisting between Christ and his church, and of the bliss involved in it, from the manner in which he treated his brethren while here upon earth, and from his prayer for them : but God himself alone can fully tell us the sweets of this relationship : it is a theme which will very shortly occupy the whole of our attention in heaven, when with the most intense delight we shall be familiarly conversing with Messiah. Yes, as familiarly as with each other now.

4. This union invests the believer with every blessing. There is nothing, (I do not hesitate to declare it,) there is nothing communicable in Deity, with which it does not bless him. “Of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.” (John i. 16.) “All things are yours,—the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come ; all are yours ; and ye are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.” (1 Cor. iii. 21—23.)

5. Lastly ; to point out this union in all its perfection, it is eternal. Indeed, I do not see how an individual, conscious of the many evils that inhabit his own bosom, and thoroughly disciplined to know himself—I do not see how he could derive the smallest comfort, or consolation, even for a single moment, were not this the case. If he looked forward through the vista of millions of ages, and could suspect the possibility of being even then left to himself, for the twinkling of an eye, the language of his heart would be—I shall be undone for ever. But “the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed ; yet my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.” (Isa. liv. 10.) Hosts of arguments might be adduced to prove, in the clearest manner, the eternity of the union subsisting between Christ and his church. It is due to Christ, in consequence of his obedience unto death ; and he would lose the reward of his sufferings, if any of his family should ever perish.

Learn the glories of every doctrine of our holy religion, in the midst of all your wants and woes. God intended that the centre of the believer’s bosom should be his study ; here the Divine Spirit, who is the guide and teacher of his family, has covenanted to meet him : and what a scholar is he destined to be, whose teacher and instructor is God himself !

## II. THE IMPORTANT BLESSINGS INVOLVED IN THIS UNION.

1. Christ in all his relationships: Friend, Brother, Surety, Physician, Redeemer, Husband, Prophet, King, High-Priest: he sustains every relationship. Take all the relationships subsisting between us and each other in the aggregate, and they will afford but a faint idea of that which subsists between Christ and his church. "He is not ashamed to call them brethren." (Heb. ii. 11.) "Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you." (John xv. 15.)

2. In Christ his people are sanctified, as well as justified. In him they are delivered, first from sin; and subsequently, and as a necessary consequence, from all the effects of sin. "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." (1 Cor. vi. 11.)

3. In this union, and in this only, we bring forth fruit unto God. We meet with nothing elsewhere, but the barrenness of death and hell. Nothing truly, positively good, has appeared since the fall, in any human being, but as it has arisen from union with Christ. "From me is thy fruit found." "The root of the righteous yieldeth

fruit.”—“I am the vine, ye are the branches.” (Hos. xiv. 8. Prov. xii. 12. John xv. 5.) He is “the head,” we are “the members.” The lifting up of my arm, the movement of my tongue, the sounds flowing from my lips, at the present moment, indicate to you the presence of a living body. Whence does the eye derive its light, or the arm its strength? Separate the one or the other from the body, and it must soon die: the very act of separation is death to it. This is a simple and scriptural illustration, calculated to give us the most vivid idea of our ceaseless dependence upon God for every thing.

4. Furthermore; in Christ, we become the peculiar charge of God’s providence. His providence, indeed, reigns over every thing; his providence overrules the evil machinations of men and devils; but his providence is particularly watchful over his own family. We are explicitly told this, again and again. “Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.” (1 Pet. v. 7.) “Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (for after all these things do the Gentiles seek :) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.” (Matt. vi. 31, 32.) In him, angels are our ministering spirits. I do not know any thing that can give them greater pleasure than the service of his human family. I remember once being

struck with what a poor man in the country said : he was almost an idiot, but yet a pious man ; when an individual was once treating him with some degree of harshness, he looked at him very mildly, and said, “ You do not know who I am : angels are my servants.” This is literally true. O that we felt the high honour which God confers upon us ! We shall converse with these ministering spirits in heaven ; and doubtless they will tell us from how many snares and temptations they preserved us, while engaged in this their most glorious, most delightful work.

5. In him, his family have every comfort and consolation, in life and in death. In him, they will be blessed with a glorious resurrection ; and in him, triumph eternally. Saints have recorded their experience ; and God, in his infinite goodness and mercy, has presented us with the record. They tell us they were conquerors, and more than conquerors, in the midst of every evil. “ Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil ; for thou art with me : thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies ; thou anointest my head with oil ; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life ; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.” (Ps. xliii. 4—6.) This is the testimony of his servant David : and that of many others might be added.

In reading scripture, one thing is continually observable ; it is this : that it dwells chiefly on the things we most need at the present moment ; and then it leads us into futurity, and tells us what we shall be : thus teaching us, that true wisdom connects the present with the future, and involves the future in the present, by changing every moment as it flies into the gold of the sanctuary.

A mother looks forward to the moment when her child will grow up to manhood ; but she does not look on manhood in the abstract : she pays attention to him every day : feeds him with food convenient for him ; gives him proper instructions : day after day she watches over him, till, at length, she sees her child grow up a man—an honourable and useful member of society, the comfort of her declining years, while her heart ascends in gratitude to God for having blessed her with such a son.

In every thing, and in all, the present moment is the chief concern. How does the miser amass his wealth ? By speculating about futurity ? O no :—by making the best use of the present moment. Men are not theorists in the things of time and sense. The children of this world are wiser in their generation ; they very aptly blend theory and practice together in their pursuits. Let us do the same. Would you know whether you shall wear a crown of glory



before the throne of God above? Let me ask, Are you engaged in winning that crown now? Are you engaged in fighting the Lord's battles now, against sin and Satan? Does conscience say you are? Then you have a good hope through grace. "O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. xv. 55, 57.) Jesus Christ has himself become the first-fruits of them that sleep. His brethren will ascend from the grave, and follow, in his train, through the crystal ports of light; and the gates of heaven will then be closed upon them for ever, as the gates of hell are now, and for ever closed against them.

But it may be very reasonably asked, How do we become interested in these blessings? The work, the great work, is achieved by the Spirit of God. We all fell in Adam. He raises us in Christ Jesus, by uniting us to him: and it is equally true that we receive the blessing by faith. We enter into the fruition of it, in the exercise of faith in Christ; and in the exercise of the same faith we triumph.

In the first Adam, we are polluted, and have wholly lost the image of the living God: this image is restored in Jesus Christ. We lost every thing in the first Adam:—by one trans-

gression we were undone ; and nothing but the blackness of despair would have been ours, for ever, had it not been for the interposition of the Saviour. But, in him, we gain much more than we lost in Adam. He not only restores man to innocence, to reinstate him in a paradise like that which Adam received from God before he fell ; but he does infinitely more :—" I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly ;"—more abundantly than angels, who kept not their first estate—more abundantly than Adam, who forfeited his.

Many foolish questions have been asked, with respect to Adam. Some say he was not spiritual. O yes he was ; the image of the living God is the same thing, in kind, wherever found. It was in Adam in Eden what it was in angels in heaven : but it is destined to live for ever, in all its glories, in the bosoms of the redeemed.

Learn a few lessons.

1. What love, what gratitude is due to Jesus Christ ! We owe him all we have. May it be our daily work to give our hearts to the Lord Jesus Christ. He gave two hearts fully to us, when we were in the ruins of the fall ; the heart of God, and the heart of man. He gave them both to our hell, and he wishes us to give our hearts to him, in the midst of his heaven. Some may say, I am altogether indisposed to do it :

my intellect tells me that it ought to be so; but, alas, when I look into my heart, how slowly it ascends! Learn two lessons from this: first, a lesson of genuine humility; and then, to prize the covenant office of the Holy Spirit; it is his to quicken day after day. “Quicken thou me according to thy word,” says the Psalmist. And indeed, when we are truly humbled—when we are made thoroughly ashamed of ourselves by the Spirit of the living God, this is no contemptible lesson; this presents us with a root, the fruits of which will, in a very short time, flourish beyond the skies.

2. Let this prompt us to immediate self-examination. Are we, individually, in Christ, or not? If not, we are in a state of condemnation; and let it be ever remembered, that it is inconsistent with the perfections of Deity, to save but in Jesus Christ. “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” (Rom. viii. 9.) If I am in Jesus Christ, I am like him—I desire to be like him. “As for me,” says David, “I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.” (Ps. xvii. 15.) We shall be satisfied with all things in him. The time is fast approaching, when every believer will be eternally satisfied with himself; and this will involve in it the deepest humility, because he will be satisfied with himself, as the work of God—with the image of

Deity, sublimated to the highest pitch of perfection, in and by God himself.

3. Learn to be happy in the midst of every earthly calamity : God intended that we should be. We have, at all times, more reason to rejoice than to be sad. We sometimes hear it said, ‘ I was, at such a time, very ill, and exceedingly depressed in spirits ; the best friend I had on earth called on me ; he threw his heart into mine—he gave me such rich proofs of his love and sympathy, that I forgot all my troubles : my heart overflowed with joy ! ’ And is there this—yes, thank God, there is this to be found in humanity. What, then, must there be in the friendship of Jesus ?

It sometimes happens that every earthly comfort fails ; that the sympathies of a friend cannot reach our case ; that our hearts are cold one towards another ; but the bosom of Christ is ever full and overflowing. “ In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them : in his love and in his pity he redeemed them ; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.” (Isa. lxiii. 9.) It is impossible to be unhappy when conscious of the presence of Christ. All the wickedness and malice of men and devils united, cannot make him miserable whom Christ makes happy with his own presence.

4. We ought to learn to love one another.

Need I tell you, that you individually love all the members of your own body? Need I tell you that one sympathizes with another? The Lord Jesus Christ sympathizes exquisitely with us. He is interested with us all; and we ought to be highly interested with each other. If we love Jesus Christ, it is impossible not to love each other: and it was intended by God that we should love each other in him. In families, sometimes, the love of father and mother is a rallying point, in which children unite themselves, after having quarrelled with each other. Parental love melts them into fraternal love. We should bind each other in mutual love, in the love of Christ: we shall then delight to serve each other. This is the proof and perfection of love; and it must ever be remembered, that our dependence upon God, involves in it a subordinate, and subservient dependence upon each other. We recognize in this wise and beneficent constitution of things many valuable ends. It is intended to remind us perpetually of our own weakness, to lay us low at the feet of Jesus, to dispose us to every act of kindness and love one towards another; and, eventually, to sublimate our friendship for each other, in the friendship of God himself. May we all know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge.

5. Let us, then, look forward to our high destiny. In a very short time we shall be with God

himself. Many of us can look back twenty, thirty, perhaps forty years, and call to remembrance the friends we then knew : it seems to be but yesterday. Time, when contrasted with eternity, becomes a mathematical point—a mere nothing. If Adam were alive now, he would feel that he was but little older than one of his sons born yesterday.

May the subject I have been dwelling upon be improved by us! May our hearts be saturated with the truth, and inhabited by the Spirit of the living God. May we be sensible that we are travelling to eternity, that we may not loiter by the way to be robbed and plundered by enemies; but move forward with all possible expedition, until eventually we arrive at our Father's home in glory.



## SERMON XX.

## THE GOSPEL MIRROR.

2 COR. iii. 18.

*But we all, with open face beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

“WHERE the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty”—freedom from the moral law as a covenant, and from the ceremonial law as a yoke of bondage. If we peruse the Old Testament with accuracy, we shall ever deprecate the revival of the ceremonial law. It would be an offence of the deepest dye against the majesty of the King of kings. “*But we all ;*” there is liberty, liberty involving in it the freedom of the Divine Being himself; and who would not be free in this liberty? Who would not be delivered from the iron

yoke of the curse? Who would not be rescued from the tyrannical dominion of all his evil passions? There are some (we bless the divine Spirit who alone maketh to differ) who have been taught to prize this liberty; and where it is possessed, heaven is begun on earth.

“*We all with open face;*” that is, without any veil; Messiah presents himself to the eye of faith, in all his mediatorial glory. I shall consider,

#### I. THE OBJECT BEHELD.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the object which the gospel presents to the eye of faith. “He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good.” (Mic. vi. 8.) This evidently alluded to the sacrifice of Christ, for God can show the sinner nothing that is good till he presents himself in Christ. Every thing then becomes pregnant with good. Man in his natural state, converts every thing into poison, he makes God himself the minister of sin; indeed, every thing on this side eternity without a mediator, is replete with evil, not only of a temporal nature, but of eternal consequence, unless he be brought to the feet of him who is able and willing to save to the uttermost. His mediatorial glories are presented to us in the volume of inspiration. “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory.” (John i. 14.) “This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory.” (John ii. 11.)

Throughout the whole tenor of his life he devoted himself entirely to the service of God and man ; not one without the other ; and in his history we find every thing we stand in need of. We see the law in all its glory, and the gospel in all its loveliness.

No one can have a perfect idea of light in the absence of the sun : and if we would understand the perfections of Deity, we must view them in the face of Jesus Christ. “ Great is the mystery of godliness.” God manifested himself in the creation of angels, and in the preservation of some, while others fell into eternal sin, and eternal torment. But a sight of Jesus in his mediatorial glory, was invariably, and successfully sought by the saints of God in all ages. As soon as they became convinced of sin, they embraced Jesus in his sacerdotal glory, travelled with him by faith, through the dark mansions of the grave, and beheld him in his eternal triumph at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

## II. THE MEDIUM OF VISION.

“ But we all, with open face, beholding, *as in a glass*, the glory of the Lord.” Constituted as we now are, we could not live in the presence of the Lord Jesus. We could not bear his glory as he is before the throne of God ; but we may form some idea of what it is from his transfiguration. We cannot fix the naked eye upon the natural

sun ; so neither could we behold Jesus in the full blaze of his glories, as he appears in the celestial courts. But though we cannot see the sun, or the Sun of Righteousness, with the naked eye, God has provided the means by which we can fix our eyes on the glories of each. On the margin of a lake whose surface is calm and unruffled, a perfect image of the sun may be beheld ; and I need hardly tell you, that the gospel is the mirror that reflects the glory of the Sun of Righteousness. But it may be asked, ‘ How am I to know that I see the Lord Jesus Christ in the gospel mirror ? ’ This is a very interesting question, and one that can easily be answered. An individual cannot stand before a mirror, without seeing himself. Now, have you beheld your own reflection in the mirror of divine truth ? Has your own image been impressed on your heart by the hand of God himself ? Has the pencil of Jehovah described yourselves on the retina of the mental eye ? He who beholds Jesus in his mediatorial glory, must necessarily behold himself in all the deformity of sin ; and he who dreams of beholding Jesus, while ignorant of himself as a sinner, is only a self-deceiver. A sight of the Saviour gives us a view of the evil and desert of sin, which nothing else can possibly do. It is much to say of sin, that it visits the sinner with destruction ; but when we see the sin of man arresting a divine person, and putting him to death,

this gives us the most awful view of our desert, while all the glories of God are presented with a full satisfaction.

### III. THE EYE THAT BEHOLDS.

A mirror is useless to one who is naturally blind ; and without spiritual sight, it is impossible to behold the glories of the Sun of Righteousness. But divine truth is not only useless to one who continues spiritually blind ; it will be attended with more awful consequences to all by whom it is wilfully rejected. After all that we could say of the human powers and of the human heart, in the rejection of the gospel, the conclusion would be this: ‘ I will not have God, I will have nothing to do with his law, or his gospel ; I will have my sin, though it ruin me eternally.’ I appeal to conscience—is it so, or is it not ?

Men, without a divine change, may have very powerful convictions, and they may see much of the glory of Jesus Christ without being changed into his image ; but this knowledge only becomes the occasion of exciting their enmity, and of maddening them against him. The illumination of the Holy Spirit is as necessary as a revelation from God, and both are alike necessary to produce the effect intended by him. Those who are regenerate, and who live daily in his favour, feel the absolute necessity of ascribing all the glory to that God whose grace maketh them to differ. The con-

sciousness of any superiority that comes from God, tends to humble us in the dust, that we may be prepared for eternal exaltation in the inheritance of the saints in light. "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." (2 Cor. iv. 6.) No *external* illumination—the apostle had his eye fixed on the mirror of God *within*. "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." (Gal. vi. 14.) "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." (Phil. iii. 8.) This was the determination of the apostle. Man never finds an object, in which he can be engaged with perpetual delight, till he beholds Jesus in his mediatorial glory. It is in the nature of created existence to weary us, when we confine our attention to it exclusively. No finite being has power to fix the ceaseless attention of a fellow-creature. God alone can do this. If we peruse with accuracy the workings of our own minds, we shall find the insufficiency of created being, and the all-sufficiency of Jesus, echoed and established by every thing around us.

#### IV. THE PERSONS BEHOLDING.

"*We all*,"—who believe without exception, and no other. The word of God divides the whole human family into two classes, believers and un-



believers. We hear of moral virtues, and amiability ; and truth obliges me to confess, that men without the Spirit of God may possess many things very valuable in promoting the interests of civil society ; but higher than this I cannot ascend. Faith in Jesus is absolutely necessary ; and when we consider that it ever proceeds from the divine Spirit, and is ceaselessly preserved by him—the same Spirit which enables saints in glory to behold Jesus with ineffable delight,—we come to this safe conclusion, that the reality of heaven inhabits the bosoms of those who love the Lord Jesus Christ. This is why the Spirit is called an earnest, not a pledge ; an earnest is part of something to come, which is not yet fully enjoyed ; not so with a pledge, for a pledge is returned, but the earnest is kept.

The testimony of the human eye gives us a perfect idea of every thing that presents itself to the external sense of vision ; and when we do not see objects as they really are, it is in consequence of some intervening distorted medium that prevents it.

The evidence of the human eye is invariably taken in a court of justice—and why ? Because it may be said to be in a certain sense the evidence of God himself, resting as it does upon certain established laws. This may serve as an illustration of the effect of divine truth on the eye of faith. The individual who possesses it knows

what is going on in heaven ; and he knows what it is to rejoice with triumph in the Lord here below. “ He that believeth hath the witness in himself,”—and what is the witness ? The witness that is within us, is a consciousness of possessing the truth of God ; and if pages were written on the subject, no more could be said.

An individual may have a consciousness of his skill in Greek, Latin, or Hebrew ; he has it in himself ; he cannot divest himself of it : and may God of his infinite goodness give us the inestimable blessing of spiritual consciousness ; which will evince itself by its fruits and effects. It is the gift of God, and therefore returns to God ; it is the gift of God, and therefore delights in honouring him. It is likewise in the light of divine revelation that this consciousness gathers strength daily. How delightful is it to see the aged Christian triumphing in the hour of dissolution ! Nothing can be more refreshing to those who are suffering under trials and afflictions, than to see a brother standing on the threshold of heaven, and proclaiming eternal victory before the moment of dissolution arrives. Seek then this consciousness daily. It is to be sought and found in the use of the means prescribed by God himself ; and may the Holy Spirit crown your endeavours with the happiest success !

V. THE EFFECT PRODUCED, — “ we are changed

into the same image from glory to glory." It is a well-known fact, that the sun has the effect of changing many colours into a perfect white; and the Sun of Righteousness can, and will change the soul into his own image.

Some of you may perhaps be labouring under the weight of a guilty conscience; and a more dreadful weight cannot be experienced on this side eternal woe. Look then, at the Sun of Righteousness. Keep your eye fixed steadily upon him; never withhold it for a moment, till your enemies are obliged to quit the field. There is something in the experience of the believer, indescribably rich; he keeps his eye on his enemies, and says 'They are too many for me,' he sits down in despair. Have they any mercy on him? Certainly not; they gather strength in proportion to his weakness. Happy is the man who has been driven by the Lord to the Saviour, obliging him to behold his glory, and to see, and in consequence of beholding, to find in him every thing he wants. Now let me ask you, how do you go on in the divine life? Is your journey progressive or retrograde? It must be one or the other; you cannot stand still. All is well, if you fix your eye steadfastly on the glory of Messiah—if you firmly believe that all things are treasured up for you in him. Beware of trusting in the least degree to any thing within yourselves, however excellent. God will not have his own grace wor-

shipped as a substitute for himself. The merit of Jesus Christ is your only title to everlasting life, while you are invested with his righteousness, that you may be made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. There is within us a legal principle so exceedingly strong, that it requires much painful discipline before we are divested of it. It is a mighty enemy, and one of the most powerful and subtle nature, because it assumes more easily the appearance of an angel of light than any other. May God deliver you from it. Our all is to be found in the Lord Jesus Christ perpetually, and beholding him by faith, and dwelling in his glory, must necessarily form the soul into his image. Every thing lovely in God, and every thing interesting to us, is to be found in him. Let me remind you, that connected with the glory of God is your own eternal welfare. Give then self-love the very place which God designed for it. Connect your eternal good with his glory ; until you learn to do this, you will never fix your eye steadily on the Sun of Righteousness. The idea of loving God with a disinterested love is nothing but a dream.

“*From glory to glory.*” But perhaps some one may say, ‘Alas ! I feel that I am making no progress ; I am not sensible of any growth.’ Do not judge hastily. Is your pride mortified ? Does your self-diffidence gather strength ? Do you mistrust yourself, and trust God more than ever ?

It is very important to be able to distinguish between principle and feeling, and to see that principle gathers strength, when feeling fails. A view of the Saviour humbles the sinner, and brings him to the dust in self-abasement. Is this your ambition? John the Baptist said, "He must increase, but I must decrease." (John iii. 30.) Holy Job said, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear : but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." (Job xlii. 5, 6.) May the Lord of his infinite goodness bless us with this disposition ! Profound humility inhabited the bosom of Jesus while on earth ; he knew better than any of his brethren, what finite being was in its absolute dependence upon God ; hence the ceaseless ambition of his humanity was to exalt Deity.

To conclude ; consider what the gospel is. Look at man : (truth challenges the intellect, as well as the heart :) is it possible that all things are soon to end for ever ? We cannot imagine anything more unworthy of God. Unless there be an eternal hereafter, if man's destiny do not travel throughout the countless ages of eternity, he is a creature unworthy the hand of his Maker. But remember again, that this must involve in it the eternal welfare or misery of every creature, while at the same time, the present season is one of probation. The only thing that stands between you and the Lord Jesus Christ is sin, developing

its venom as I have before described ; ‘ I will have nothing to do with God.’ O let me invite you all to this Saviour, that you may be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation. To you who have been led to the Saviour, I would say, Never suffer anything to divert you from him. Behold yourselves in him. “ My sin is ever before me,” said David, but the sacrifice was also ever before him. Gaze at once on Jesus,—on all the glories of the Sun of Righteousness till you are obliged to borrow his wings to travel into the bosom of God himself, to dwell in his bliss for ever and ever.



## SERMON XXI.

## THE CHRISTIAN WARRIOR.

1 COR. xvi. 13.

*Quit you like men.*

THE life of the Apostle Paul presents us with a striking contrast : there was a period when he fought in the van of the armies of hell against the living God ; but when changed by divine grace he is found fighting manfully under the banner of the Captain of our salvation, against the world, the flesh, and the devil ; with the glory of God, and the salvation of his brethren primarily and perpetually in view. He seemed to lose sight of every thing else while engaged in this delightful and triumphant work. When the eye is fixed upon some distant eminence, it is so much occupied with its sublimities, that the grass, shrubs, and trees which intervene, are forgotten : thus may we fix our eyes on the hill of Zion which is above, where angels and the spirits of

just men made perfect, are hymning the praises of their great Creator ; above all, may the eye of faith be fixed upon the Saviour whose glorious excellencies so attracted the heart of the apostle, that he seemed to travel toward heaven on the wings of lightning itself. May we know something of that sacred fire which inspired him first of all to descend into his own bosom, and enabled him then to enter the regions of the prince of darkness, applying the torch of truth to hearts naturally as cold as the winter of the pole. In the ninth verse he says, "For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries." But did they keep him from the door? No, my brethren, he cut his way through them all, and entered in, and we must do the same if ever we mean to enter the gates of bliss. The apostle goes on to say, "Stand fast in the faith : " cleave closely to the truth of God. Let us examine ourselves in this respect ; do we with all the heart, as well as with all the intellect, believe every thing that God has revealed ? "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." If truly wise, we shall as fully believe that there is a heaven and a hell as if we were now inhabitants of either place. This is the root of all religious principle. One thing peculiar to the spiritual mind is this, that it does not make either feeling or intellect its guide. The truth of God is the believer's ceaseless rule ;

cleaving to this with full purpose of heart, he perseveres in treading the narrow path that leads to everlasting life, without deviating in the least degree to the right hand or to the left. Yet feelings are not to be despised, especially those which emanate from the Holy Spirit ; they purify and exalt the man, and prepare him for an eternity of bliss ; but *truth* is the *parent* of correct feeling. When those delightful sensations which we once experienced are fled, it is not unlawful to weep over them ; as the gift of God, they should be prized, though not idolized. In their absence, we must live as Messiah did in the garden and on the cross, when he had nothing to trust but his Father's promise. Had he consulted feeling in that awful hour of trial he must have failed in his great work ; nevertheless, in circumstances infinitely more trying than any to which his brethren have been exposed, he believed the promise of his Father, and triumphed gloriously ; and we must do the same. The truth of God is to be our standard ; and when this is firmly adhered to, delightful feelings, if lost for a season, will return. The truth of God was the weapon which the Saviour always used when assailed by his enemies. When the tempter approached him, he repelled him with this, "It is written." It is a sword of ethereal temper, it has been tried again and again, and has been so skilfully wielded by the arm of the great Captain of our salvation, that it has inflicted the mortal

wound on Satan, and become a terror to all our spiritual foes. The same weapon must be used by all his family, and they are destined to conquer through him ! “Quit you like men, be strong.”

The believer is compared in Scripture to a soldier, and the christian life to a warfare. I need not quote passages of Scripture to prove this. We are all, really or professedly, engaged in warfare ; the enemies against which we have to contend are peculiar, and we must be either slaves or conquerors eternally. We are all soldiers naturally ; born in the camp of the devil, wilfully fighting against the Lord of Hosts. This is the natural disposition of every son and daughter of Adam. Alas ! if they knew themselves, men would never dream of any returning from hell. No one but the Captain of our salvation, no one but the Lord of Hosts, ever could do this. He ascended from the depth of our hell to occupy the zenith of glory as the head and representative of his people, eventually to bring them to himself, and make them holy and happy for ever. This warfare is spiritual ; the believer’s bosom is a scene of perpetual conflict, in which there are two armies opposed, each seeking the destruction of the other ; and were it not for that God who is the strength of Israel, the most eminent saint would soon fall an eternal sacrifice to his own corruptions. Does any one ask how this can be consistent with a state of grace ? I answer, there

cannot be a state of grace without it. Fix your eye upon an individual once the vassal of sin and Satan ; see him armed with God himself, fighting against all his naturally evil propensities, and you behold a being far more glorious than an angel of light—a being who possesses the genuine spirit of martyrdom—a being who is at once the spectacle of heaven, earth, and hell. His work, it is true, is arduous, but his reward will be eternal.

There is a striking peculiarity in this warfare ; the *whole* man is engaged in it. There are only two things capable of calling all the powers of the human intellect and affections into action, viz. sin, and that which is diametrically opposed to it—obedience to God. May we individually feel this. Sin is the most shameful of all things ; it aims at the destruction of God, his Christ, and his church, and at the annihilation of every thing that is excellent and lovely in humanity : obedience to God, and fighting in his service is the most honourable—it is the antipodes of sin, it involves the glory of the divine perfections. Man under the influence of sin is so foolish, and so madly bent on his eternal destruction, that he will part with every thing—God, heaven, and eternal happiness—for the gratification of a single moment. This is what our first parents did in Eden, and what all their posterity have ever since done until regenerated by the divine Spirit. God grant that we may be really and truly warriors,

nobly ambitious of giving up ourselves entirely to his service. A little religion has a tendency to make a man miserable. He cannot enjoy happiness in things which once afforded him a semblance of it; nor are his principles sufficiently strong, to enable him to seek it in God. He is not fit for heaven, or earth, or hell! We must bring him in the arms of prayer, and cry, "O Lord! deliver him, and place him in thine own bosom."

The believer is not only a soldier, he is a sentinel likewise:—a deserter indeed, but the desertion is a most honourable one—a desertion from the lines of sin and Satan, to fight the battle of the King of kings. We are surrounded by many enemies, all of whom are extremely vigilant. Satan, the mighty chief, never rests; but "as a roaring lion walketh about seeking whom he may devour." The same may be said of our corruptions, they never sleep; hence the necessity of exercising the utmost vigilance; if we know our own weakness, and the strength of our enemies, we shall ever be assiduously engaged in watching and prayer. It is said, that the French once practised, or devised the scheme of ascending in balloons to reconnoitre their enemies' camps, and watch their movements. It was at least an ingenious plan to enable them to ascertain the operations of the enemy, far removed from the range of their artillery. However it might be with them, the truth,



as it respects the believer, is, that he must ascend, and find a position above the earth whence to view the movements of his enemies. We never know God, we never know ourselves, we never know our enemies, until we wing our flight from earth to heaven in prayer and praise. And who are the most watchful? Who are the most vigilant? Who are the most wise, and exemplary in their conduct? Those who daily live in the most intimate communion with God; who are as far as possible removed from the pestilential atmosphere of sin. Be sentinels as well as soldiers—watch well, and you will fight well. We see in some an acuteness of intellect that seems to move with equal accuracy and rapidity. It can be found only in him who lives in daily communion with God. It is wonderful how true religion strengthens the intellect, and expands the heart.

Sin is an enemy, no sooner recognized by the believer than he falls prostrate, and supplicates that the strength of God may be made perfect in his own weakness; then he meets the enemy with the courage of a true warrior. May it be so with us, that we may begin on earth that triumphant song of praise, which shall be continued throughout eternity.

Again: the believer fights under one who is perfectly acquainted with all the machinations of the enemy. There was a period when the Captain of his salvation entered the field of battle

alone, "travelling in the greatness of his strength." Never did God make manifest all the glory of his perfections till he appeared as a man of war, fighting the battles of his church, in the person of his Son Jesus Christ. He has created the sun, moon, and stars, and upholds them in being; he has done infinitely more, he has atoned for sin, and provided the means for subduing, and eventually annihilating it, in the hearts of his people.

Returning from his conquest, this question is asked, "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah?" &c. (Is. lxiii. 1—4.) Woe to our enemies now; woe to all the enemies of the church of Christ. Messiah has atoned for sin, he has acquired the right to save, and he will exercise it eternally. O that all would listen to him! O that all would hear the truth of God respecting their own delinquency and desert, and his all-sufficient righteousness and atonement. View him again as welcomed by the hosts of heaven. Perhaps if those highly favoured individuals who saw him ascend were now present, to tell us the language of their hearts, we should hear that it was this; "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in." (Ps. xxiv. 7.)

Again: it is a warfare in which all the armies of the Lord are engaged. How interesting will it be in eternity to consider that the universe has

been made subservient to the purpose of the Almighty, in saving his chosen people. The striking instances which are recorded in Scripture can only be considered as a few specimens to encourage us to trust in the Lord in the most trying circumstances, and set his enemies, and our enemies, at perfect defiance. We are more highly favoured than the saints under the Old Testament dispensation, in having the whole of the revealed will of God made known to us ; we are called to exercise faith and patience in a more eminent degree than they were, for our obligations must increase in proportion to the means with which we are privileged. God grant that we may individually feel this ; that our gratitude may as much exceed that of the Jews of old, as the light of the noon-day sun which we enjoy, exceeds the twilight in which they lived. May the spirit of Messiah descend upon us, and kindle a flame in our hearts, similar to that which glows in the bosoms of saints and angels above. The apostle tells us that “all things shall work together for good to them that love God.” Yes, all creation, animate and inanimate, all is engaged in fighting the battles of the Lord. “Is there any number of his armies?”

The Lord may, and sometimes does, suffer his children to be placed in very trying circumstances, that they may discover their own weakness, and cry to him for help. View Israel on the banks of

the Red Sea ; the waters before, their enemies behind ; instead of remembering the miracles wrought for their deliverance, and believing the truth of Jehovah's promise, they listened to their corrupt feelings, were influenced by their fears, and consequently rebelled against Moses, or rather against God. Yet the waters opened before them, becoming a wall of protection on either side ; and as soon as they had crossed in safety, the sea closed its bosom, and became the sepulchre of their enemies. Fight on, my brother—fight on, my sister ; the period is not far distant when a passage will be opened for you ; the gates of the New Jerusalem will fly open to receive you, and though your enemies may pursue you with the most persevering malice, not one of them shall reach the shores of the heavenly Canaan. The church of God is as dear to him at the present day, as it was in the time of Moses, Daniel, and the prophets ; and his providence watches over every individual member of his family. I remember reading the history of some good man, who was persecuted by the papists, and obliged to fly for his life ; he suddenly espied a cave, into which he entered, and soon after observed a spider busily employed in weaving his web across the mouth of the entrance. His enemies came to the place, and one of them observing, " He cannot be there, for there is a spider's web," they left the spot, and continued

their search. Is it presumptuous to think that the spider on this occasion had been more expeditious than usual? He was engaged in a new work—in shielding a saint of God, in protecting one of the family of heaven.

This warfare is one in which the weak are destined to conquer the strong. Some complain that they are weak in faith. Are you convinced that you are not only weak, but weakness itself? When God wishes us to do all things, he convinces us first that we can do nothing: our pride must have a death-blow, that he may have all the glory of our conquest. Are we disposed to render it to him? if so, we are destined to participate with him in the revenue of glory which will flow to him throughout eternity from the triumph of his believing people. No one but God can calculate the weakness of humanity, but weak as it is, it is destined to obtain an eternal victory over sin and Satan, death and hell. Satan exulted in the fall of our first parents in Eden: but how will he appear in the eyes of universal being in the last day?

God frequently accomplishes great things, by means which to men appear contemptible in the extreme. The Philistines in hell remember the jaw-bone that slew them, wielded as it was by the arm of Samson, in the strength of God. The Israelites thought it foolish and presumptuous in David to go to meet the Philistine with a sling

and a stone ; but he was influenced by the Spirit of Jehovah. He was led to the field of battle by the Lord of hosts, and consequently his enemies trembled before him. The apostle was fully conscious of his own weakness ; yet hear what he says, " I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." (Phil. iv. 13.) Mark the consequences ; he puts all his spiritual adversaries to flight, and exclaims, " Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. xv. 57.) And this was not his exclusive privilege as an apostle ; by no means ; but one to be conferred upon us individually : may we fall on our knees, and invoke the blessing, and keep no silence, until we are in conscious possession of it.

Again : it is a warfare in which no soldier ever perished. Many, alas ! have been severely wounded ; but the divine Physician has infused new life into all the wounds of guilt, and they have returned to the charge, and fought more valiantly than ever. Witness the conduct of David, Peter, and others, and observe one thing ; where God takes the rod to correct his child, he seems to present him with a view of what is more awful, than if the gates of hell were thrown open, and he could behold the torments of the lost spirits. We should bear these things in mind ; and also the mercy of God in his chastisements. See how David smarted under the stroke of God. In his



punishment we see a counterpart of the crime ; but though God severely chastised him, he did not destroy him ; though grievously wounded, he rose again, and renewed the conflict, till he triumphed completely : “ Although my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure.” (2 Sam. xxiii. 5.) Peter never forgot his denial of his Lord ; nor Thomas his unbelief ; a consciousness of having been once overcome by Satan, inspired them with fresh zeal. God chastises his children, but he overrules all the machinations of the enemy ; every shaft levelled at them, is primarily levelled against God ; it is caught on the shield of the Almighty, and returns upon the enemy with redoubled force. Little did Satan think, when he urged the Jews to crucify Messiah, that the blessings emanating from his death, would be so rich as to involve all the glories of eternity. Have any of you, my dear brethren, been severely wounded ? Are you now lying on the field of battle ? Hasten to the Captain of your salvation ; he is still a physician ; he can “ forgive all your sins, and heal all your diseases.” Yet the conflict may be so severe, that you may be tempted to sink into despondency, if not into despair ; but let me tell you one thing that may encourage you to lift up your head as becomes a soldier of the Most High : strong as corruption is, (and it is stronger than any thing but God

himself,) strong as human corruption is, it has its source only in the creature, but grace has its source in God. Corruption, though strong, can only be fed by the creature ;—grace, however weak, will be fed and nourished by God himself ! May the Spirit of the Father and the Son enable you to do justice to this important truth.

Again : this is a warfare in which no quarter is given. All enemies must be destroyed. It is high treason against the King of kings to spare even one : fight on, my brethren ; deal home every blow ; death to every lust—death to every evil passion—death to every thing that opposeth itself to God ; no royal Agag, no beloved Delilah can be spared ; all, all must be sacrificed, though dear as a right arm, or a right eye. I invite you all to fight ; fight manfully the good fight of faith ; the shouts of victory will soon reach your ears, and there will be nothing to mar your joy. I can well remember, when residing in the principality, with what eagerness the lists of killed and wounded were perused ; the rejoicings of victory were soon interrupted when tidings came that a beloved son, or an affectionate husband, had been slain on the field of battle, and would be seen no more within the precincts of time. But there will be nothing of this in eternity ; there will be no lists of killed and wounded to peruse in the last day ; all the family of heaven, all the soldiers of the Lord of hosts will

appear, every one of them, in Zion before God, in the beauties of holiness, to celebrate their eternal victory ; all their wounds will have been so effectually healed by the great physician, the captain of their salvation, that not a single scar will be seen ; they will all be perfect in the righteousness and image of their Lord and Saviour. “I shall be satisfied,” says the psalmist, “when I awake with thy likeness.” (Ps. xvii. 15.)

Lastly, victory is certain. This ought to animate and encourage us on the field of battle ; and inspire us to fight manfully for our God. Take this as an encouragement,—your success is certain—as certain as that of Christ himself ! Honour this truth, and you will never suffer any enemy to triumph over you. It was by conquering that the Saviour procured every thing : this, in an important sense, is absolutely true of us individually ; we can never exercise any one grace without victory over ourselves ; the field of battle must be our own hearts ; there all our enemies must be met, and triumphed over in the strength of God. If we know what it is thus to conquer day by day, we know what it is to anticipate eternal victory, the fruits of which will be reaped for ever and ever. When the conscience is purged, and kept pure by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the believer, though weak in himself, is “strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.” When conscious of the favour and friendship of God,

he makes an easy conquest. Peruse the history of saints, as recorded in the Old and New Testament, and you will invariably find that when they have fallen, principle has been defective; they have first fallen within. O my brethren, let it be your daily work to cultivate principle, and remember, it does not follow that because, you have fought well to-day, you will fight well to-morrow; by no means: it is God who teacheth your hands to war, and your fingers to fight; you are perpetually dependent upon him. Wait upon him daily, and the blessing will be imparted.

The effects of this victory will be glorious in the extreme; they will involve the friendship of God in the highest degree, and the most glorious manner in which finite being can possibly possess, and enjoy it for ever. The enemy once entered heaven—we have heard of the lamentable consequences; he afterwards entered Eden, and we behold the desolation he has made; but never, never will he enter the Jerusalem which is above. God will be our sun and shield, and a consciousness of his eternal presence will inspire us with the highest strains of gratitude for ever and ever. Fight on, my brethren, warriors as well as poets have their wreaths, and an immortal name beside. But what are all earth's fading laurels, and its wretched immortality, compared with the eternal crown of victory? Eternity is the reward of

the believer ; and in that eternity he will possess God in all the glory of his perfections as his inheritance and portion for ever. — What can we desire more? What more can God himself bestow?

## SERMON XXII.

THE CONDEMNATION OF SIN IN THE FLESH,  
NOT BY THE LAW, BUT BY THE MISSION OF  
THE SON OF GOD.

ROM. viii. 3.

*For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.*

THE 7th and 8th chapters of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans present us with a very striking and interesting contrast. The apostle gives us a history of his own experience from the period when truth first began to influence his heart, and consequently to regulate his life, up to the time when he penned this Epistle.

In the 24th verse of the 7th chapter, he exclaims, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." It has



been supposed by some that the apostle was not a regenerate man when he uttered these words; but could any man, unrenewed in principle, unchanged in heart, thank God for present deliverance, and anticipate complete and eternal deliverance hereafter? By no means. The apostle is here speaking as a *believer* of the glories of his divine Master, and he evidently does justice to the subject. He teaches nothing by halves, but whenever he takes up his pen to present us with a portrait either of God or man, he invariably places before us the full features of truth—nothing is added, nothing is omitted. He frequently dwells upon the same truth, presenting his readers, as it were, with a cube, on which are a variety of figures, yet all connected; he exhibits first one side, and then another, in order to give them a just view of the comprehensiveness of divine truth, and the blessings revealed in it to a ruined world.

After having said, “I thank God, through our Lord Jesus Christ,” he proceeds in the most triumphant strain; inviting the whole church of God to follow him in the adoption of the same grateful language, as a prelude to that song which the redeemed of the Lord will sing through the countless ages of eternity. May it be our privilege fully to enter into the experience of the apostle.

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not

after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” No, there can be no condemnation for them : for on such the second death hath no power, because they have passed from death unto life ; they have been quickened from the death of sin to a life of righteousness. “ The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death :” free from its condemning power ; free from its reigning power ; and consequently, free in every possible sense from its destructive power. Well might the poet say—

“ He is the freeman, whom the truth makes free,  
And all are slaves beside.”

The text easily and naturally divides itself ; I shall therefore follow its order, and consider,

## I. THE LAW OF GOD.

1. The law of God is a perfect transcript of the divine perfections. It is that immutable rule by which he governs all his moral agents. In substance, it is the same every where, and under every dispensation. It is a perfect rule of action ; essentially the same, wherever found : it was in heaven, before it was given to man on earth, and it is at the present moment, what it will be through the countless ages of eternity. Man must therefore eventually be brought into perfect and eternal conformity to it, or perish for ever. When angels were first called into exis-

tence, they were commanded to love God and to love each other ; and so were our first parents, when in Eden. The authority of God is one and the same wherever it is exercised, and the principle of obedience is likewise one and the same. Obedience to God necessarily insures the welfare of the creature ; and nothing produces evil, but the creature's own rebellion against God. The Saviour gives us the essence of the moral law in these words, " Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy mind, with all thy soul, and with all thy strength ; and thy neighbour as thyself ! " God is the source of love. All love, wherever found, has its source primarily in him. He requires supreme love to himself ; he alone has a *right* to demand it. He alone is worthy of it ; and the creature loves himself as he ought, only in the love of God. We frequently hear it said, that there is a great deal of selfishness in religion. God intended that we should obey him from a principle of self-love. He never required obedience at the hands of any being without a consideration of his welfare. It is right that we should hate sin, not only because it is opposed to the law of God, but likewise because it is destructive to our own happiness. Avoid sin, then, from a principle of self-love, for sin, when analyzed, involves self-hatred, because it involves the destruction of self-love. Love to God, and love to each other, are two commands

that will live for ever ; they comprise every principle of action ; and they must therefore necessarily comprise every other command ; “On these two commandments,” says our Saviour, “hang all the law and the prophets.” What a comprehensive view of truth he takes ; he would have us notice every command which God has given ; and in the pentateuch, we find a number of commands flowing from these two. The Saviour had also in view the ceremonial law ; and at the same time the predictions concerning himself, connected with the charges brought against the Jews by one prophet after another whom God had commissioned to warn them of their sins, and to teach them the absolute necessity of an infinite sacrifice.

The moral law inhabits the perfections of God : if traced to its source, it must be traced beyond the will of the Deity ; it must be traced to his essential perfection. On the supposition of God’s calling into existence a creature as an accountable being, two things were necessary, right reason, and a correct rule. God presented him with the law he loved ; had he given any other, it would have been hateful to him ; this is the only law, in obedience to which the creature can find bliss. It flows from his infinite beneficence, as well as from his holiness. It is so perfect and excellent, that it is worthy of the love of all beings, and this even the devils and lost spirits know at

the present moment. The sovereignty of God may interrupt the laws of nature at any time ; if it pleased him to permit it, we might fight against them without injuring ourselves. The earth might open its mouth and swallow us up, and yet we might be preserved alive ; we might live happily even in the bottom of the ocean : there is no impossibility in these things. But the sovereignty of God cannot in the least degree affect his holy law : it is an infinite impossibility. This rule can never be dispensed with ; it is not too much to say that even God himself cannot dispense with his own law. It is so perfect that it cannot be altered, or relaxed in the least degree. Any other rule of action would have been injustice to God, and injustice to his creatures ; and would have driven innocent beings into misery. This law invariably shields and blesses the innocent, and makes none unhappy but those who wilfully transgress it. Many thoughtless persons have complained of the rigour of God's holy law, but their complaints only prove the corruption of their hearts. What reason can be assigned for men quarrelling with the law of God, when it presents only a perfect transcript of the divine purity ? The reason is evident, they are transgressors. It is easy to account for the thief and the assassin quarrelling with the law of the land, when they are visited with the punishment it necessarily inflicts. But those against whom no

charge of theft or murder can be established, love the law, because it protects the innocent.

2. Consider the law of God in its penal sanctions: in these, awful as they are, we still find the justice of Jehovah spotless! There is something in the curse of the violated law, that proclaims the glories of the divine nature in a very striking manner; and of this we shall be deeply sensible throughout eternity. We shall be able to enter into the very spirit of the law when we have left this world, and are presented before the throne of God in glory, eternally perfect in the righteousness and the image of Christ. Only consider for a moment what sin is—and you will see how easily all the arguments of those who contend for the non-eternity of punishment hereafter are disposed of; they immediately vanish when scrutinized by the light of divine truth. Those who make these assertions are ignorant of themselves; ignorant of God, and of his law; ignorant of the evil and the desert of sin. We have only to define sin, and to notice a few truisms, to see that the punishment of it must be eternal. Sin is the rejection of an infinite good. The rejection of an infinite good must involve an infinite evil. Sin is never found as an insulated act: wherever it evinces its existence, it there lives as a principle; and he who once transgresses the law of God, possesses a disposition to violate that law throughout eternity. The lan-



guage of the transgressor in every act is, ‘Depart from me, O God, for ever:’ and not only this, but ‘I will fight against thee to eternity.’ This is the language of the *heart*; and it is proved to be so by the sinner’s subsequent rebellion. Sin is eternal rebellion against eternal good; it must then in the nature of things involve eternal evil, and as such deserve eternal punishment. There would be more consistency in denying any punishment—more of the semblance of truth in at once asserting that sin ought not to be punished at all, than in denying the eternity of hell’s torments. The consequences of sin are not to be measured by the time occupied in its commission. For instance, it is in the power of an individual to sacrifice a vast property at the gaming-table in the short space of one hour: if he do so, it is gone from him for ever. I only mention this as an illustration of the justice of God. I have already observed that man must be brought into perfect conformity to God’s holy law, or perish for ever. I would add, that God himself has no alternative; all the sins that inhabit the bosom of man, and all the perfections that inhabit Deity, equally demand this. True it is, that the transgressor will not be punished exclusively, and for ever, for the sins he may have committed in this world; though if he were, the punishment would be very just, for the reason I have assigned, viz. that he possesses a disposition to

violate the command of God through all eternity. But the habit of sin will be carried with him into hell, and gather new strength every moment. Behold the justice of God shining conspicuously, even in the curse!

God is as holy in his curse as he is in his command; and it is a truth—though indeed an awful truth—that the transgressor hates God in exact proportion as he discovers the purity of his law. In the 7th chapter of this Epistle the apostle says, “Sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence.” The apostle was suffered to feel the effects of sin in his own bosom, in order to qualify him under the divine blessing for instructing others. The law, in the purity of its command, maddens the transgressor; and in exact proportion as he discovers its purity, he arms himself with all the strength of his corruptions to fight against it.

### 3. Consider the state of man under the law.

All mankind are individually guilty of transgressing the holy and just law of God. You and I have transgressed it ten thousand times. This is a truth to which our attention ought to be directed more or less every day: we should live in the constant habit of applying the rule of God’s holy law to all our thoughts, words, and actions; and consider our own desert in the light

of his truth. Is any one disposed to ask, 'Why should this be done?' I answer, to endear a Saviour above all things—to endear him who "became the end," or the perfection "of the law to every one that believeth." Some are betrayed into this awful error, that because man is indisposed to obedience, the law of God has no right to demand it: this is the creed of many at the present day. The truth is, the law requires infinitely more at the hands of the guilty, than it does at the hands of the innocent. It requires only obedience from innocent beings, but every transgressor owes the law not only a debt of obedience, but a debt of punishment, and that an infinite one. When Adam was in a state of innocence, he was subject to the command of God. Angels in heaven are subject to his command at the present moment, and ever will be; but man, as a transgressor, is not only under the precept, but also under the curse of his violated law. This curse pursues him now, and if he wilfully spurn the obedience of faith, it must follow him for ever and ever, and visit him with condign punishment.

4. Consider, why the law was made known to man.—The law is revealed to man as a transcript of the divine perfections, shewing him the holiness and the justice of God, that in the light of the most awful contrast he might behold

his own deformity, and consequently his desert as a transgressor.

It is evident from what the psalmist says, that he used the law of God as a mirror. “ I have seen an end of all perfection, but thy commandment is exceeding broad.” He travels into the region of despair, but it was the despair of saving himself by any future obedience to the law, which he had once violated. This truth is also presented to us by the apostle, although in different words,—“ By the law is the knowledge of sin,” and in his first three chapters to the Romans he speaks of sin as viewed in the light of God’s holy law, and concludes by saying, “ Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified. For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” We are all under this law, without exception, and it must, and will necessarily cast into the depth of hell every one who does not seek, and find a refuge in the bosom of a Saviour. In the name of the living God I charge you all to discard that which is called charity—or in plain terms, enmity against God and man; as it charges the God of truth with falsehood, and envelopes his truth in the gloom of night. The law knows no mercy; its curse is armed with

infinite power against the transgressor. The law must do its work; we must become acquainted with it; we must know it in its condemnation; conscience must be invested with the honesty of Deity to condemn man in his own bosom. We must echo the holiness of the curse as well as the purity of the command.

The law as contained in the Mosaic writings, and afterwards in the Psalms and the prophets, was evidently given for another reason,—to shew the nature, the necessity, and the perfection of the work of Jesus Christ. In the 40th Psalm, and in the 6th, 7th, and 8th verses we have the following words: “Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire: mine ears hast thou opened;” that is, thou hast provided me with humanity; “burnt-offering and sin-offering hast thou not required;” no, not as a *real* sacrifice for sin. “Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me; I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart.” If we consider that a divine person is here speaking, it clearly follows that the divine law was written in the bosom of his Deity, and thence transcribed in the bosom of his humanity. Much has been said and written upon the covenant of Sinai, but it is evidently a branch of the covenant of grace; it cannot be a covenant of works, for this reason—the ceremonial law accompanied it. God governed his Jewish church by the moral law in

a ceremonial gospel: he governs his church at the present day by the same law in a *real*, not in a typical gospel; but the law was given in a typical gospel, to teach those who followed after, and looked through the vista of futurity, that the Saviour had engaged to fulfil it as a covenant.

Again: The law was given to shew that perfection to which God is determined eventually to bring his family; and the perfection the apostle had in view, was perfect conformity to Christ. It is impossible to be conformed to the Saviour, without being conformed to the law of God; for as the law of God was his rule, it must be that of every believer. The law is also presented to us, to teach us to prize the work of the Holy Spirit; for it is the Holy Spirit that calls into existence, and preserves alive for ever, that principle of obedience which the law requires. This David knew perfectly well: after he had transgressed, and eaten the bitter fruits of his transgression, he cried out, "Take not thy Holy Spirit from me." As if the saint had said, 'I have experienced the painful consequences of being left to myself; therefore "restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free Spirit; then will I teach transgressors thy way, and sinners shall be converted unto thee.'" (Ps. li. 11—13.)

The text leads us to consider,



II. THE WEAKNESS OF THE LAW. “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh,” &c.

I have observed that the law of God is a perfect rule of action ; so perfect that nothing can be added to it, nor any thing taken from it, without injustice to the divine attributes, and injustice to the creature. The weakness of the law, therefore, does not arise from any imperfection in itself, but from the imperfection of man. The law requires perfect purity of principle, and it will be satisfied with nothing less than that principle which gives the heart wholly to God. The law of God commands the will ; hence the absolute necessity of a principle of obedience : this, under the influence of our natural corruptions, we are, alas ! too prone to forget. God legislates for the human will. Had the Bible been the work of an impostor, he never could have dreamed of legislating for the human heart. We see the truth in the twinkling of an eye, that he who presented us with the book that is before me, must be omniscient—must be omnipotent. He must be that Being to whom obedience is due ; whatever may be the disposition of his creatures, whether obedient or disobedient in themselves.

The weakness of the law consists in these two particulars :—

1. It confers no principle of action. Now, considered in itself, no law, whether human or

divine, imparts a principle of obedience. That law by which angels in heaven are governed at the present moment, does not impart a principle of loyalty to the King of kings. This is not only a general, but an universal truth, and will admit of an easy illustration. The law of the land does not communicate to any of us a principle of loyalty. The law enacted by the three estates of the realm against theft, does not, cannot, impart a principle of honesty; otherwise no individual would be received into prison, conducted from thence to the bar of justice, and afterwards to the scaffold, for the commission of this crime. There must be two things to secure obedience—a rule, and a principle that loves and embraces that rule. I have observed that no law, whether human or divine, imparts a principle of rectitude so as to produce conduct corresponding with the rule. What can we expect the violated law of God to do in all the rigour of its curse, as well as in all the purity of its command? When we consider man as a transgressor, there is an awful import in the words of the text, “For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.” Sinful flesh,—a principle not only *indisposed* to the will of God, but *wholly opposed* to it. Now what is opposed to the law of God can never secure obedience to it. Man cannot be the friend

of God while he is his enemy ; he cannot love and hate the same being at one moment. I have often had occasion to observe that the law that condemns an individual cannot acquit him ; but this (though clear, and a good illustration, as far as it goes) does not convey the truth. A man may violate the law of the land once, yet taking the whole tenor of his conduct into consideration, he may be said to have honoured it during the remainder of his life ; but he who has once violated the law of God possesses a disposition to dishonour that law through eternity. If there be any one present who is looking to the law of God in its covenant form for justification, I conjure him to pay attention to every syllable that flows from my lips. Man being utterly destitute of a principle of obedience to the law of God, and that law not affording him the least shadow of a principle of obedience, where is he to look for it ? It has been, and ever must be through the endless duration of eternity, the blessing of the Divine Spirit !

2. The law of God provides no sacrifice for an atonement ; and here I would again reason from analogy. Does the law of the land provide a substitute for the murderer ? Does it provide him with any thing that can enable him to atone for his transgression ? Nothing whatever ! What will it avail him when he is upon trial, or when he is condemned, to say that he has conducted himself

with the utmost propriety while in prison ? Will the law listen to this ? By no means. Common sense will constrain many immediately to assent to what I am now stating ; but, alas ! when they enter, or rather, *profess* to enter, upon divine things, common sense is left behind.

It is clear that no human obedience can avail man any thing after he has once violated the holy law of God. See how weak the law is in this respect ;—although in another respect it is mighty. It is too weak to justify or to sanctify, but it is mighty to condemn. The violated law has nothing to present man with but destruction. Look at the murderer in the hands of justice, after having been convicted by a jury—has he any chance of escaping ? None whatever ; he is, if I may so speak, the outcast of heaven and of earth. How awful the state of man as a transgressor ; alike destitute of a principle of obedience, and of a sacrifice ;—the law at the same time demanding both, and bestowing neither !

It is awful to hear thoughtless sinners making excuses for their sins ; excuses with which they would if possible meet the law of God ; but, alas ! they never can be valid in judgment. The truth is, that the demands of the law of God multiply in exact proportion to the sinner's inability to meet them ; so that human inability, as it is termed, is so far from furnishing the sinner with

an excuse, that even his palliation, when analyzed, is found to be an aggravation of his sin; for it is an indisposition to love and serve God, and consequently a disposition to rebel against him. Is God obliged to confer a disposition to obey? Consider the dreadful consequences of admitting this; God is made the author of all the sin man has ever committed! I shudder at the thought. Do you think that a thief when standing before the judge, could defend himself in this manner? After having been found guilty, suppose he was asked this question: 'Have you any reason to assign why the law of the land should not take its course, and visit you with condign punishment?' Suppose he were to make the following defence: 'I am such a thief that I cannot help stealing every thing within my reach—such a thief in principle, that I cannot be honest; and for this reason I ought not to be punished.' Would this, I ask, be a sufficient defence? I appeal once more to the nature of things, and travel from human courts of justice to the court of conscience, which ought to be the court of Deity; for nothing but truth ought to prevail there. Truth must eventually and for ever prevail in the consciences of all beings, whether inhabitants of heaven or hell. O hear this, I beseech you, thoughtless sinners; I am presenting you with that truth, the direct tendency of which is to make you quarrel with yourselves.

I have no idea of preaching merely to please the ear of man ; I wish to preach in such a manner as to reach the heart of man, and please the ear of God ! I repeat the truth, and conjure you to bear it in mind, that the law of God will pursue man through the countless ages of eternity, demanding more from him than from innocent beings who have never transgressed it ; demanding more from devils and lost spirits than from those pure beings who have kept their first estate. They owe to the law a debt of obedience, and they possess a disposition to obey it, that disposition the gift of God ; but man, as a transgressor, owes to the law a debt of obedience as well as a debt of suffering ; and he is destitute, altogether destitute, both of a disposition to obey, and of a sacrifice to present.

I now leave this head of my discourse, beseeching him, who is the Father of mercies, to write the truth in your heart and mine, in all the characters of eternity !

III. Consider THE MISSION OF THE SON OF GOD !  
“ For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh.”

1. The person of the Son of God. When he assumed humanity, he took upon him all the features of the Ethiopian, but he did not assume his hue ; for



the Scripture tells us he was white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand. (Cant. v. 10.) Hence the expression in the text, "In the *likeness* of sinful flesh;" not *sinful* flesh, but necessarily a *sinless* likeness of *sinful* flesh. In consequence of the union of the Saviour's humanity with the second person in the Trinity, it was as necessarily removed from every tendency to evil, as God himself. We evidently see from the 40th psalm (to which I have already alluded) that the law was written in principle in the Saviour's bosom; "Thy law is within my heart." The law requires purity of principle. Behold the Saviour of mankind! Here is one who entered the world with a pure principle; a principle involving all the purity of Deity as its source; a principle united to Deity, to be fed by Deity perpetually. We therefore easily account for the Saviour's triumph.

This principle subsequently developed itself in his active obedience here below, and eventually in his passive obedience on the cross. The Saviour met the law of God in his own bosom; mark, a divine person met the law in the bosom of humanity, and gave it every thing it could possibly demand—gave it (if I may so express myself) all its heaven, and all its hell. The dimensions of the Saviour's obedience, whether active or passive, leaves at an infinite distance the obedience of all other beings. Here is obedience

that at once proclaims the authority of God, and proves the immutability of his holy law !

It is a truth founded in the nature of things, that a divine person was absolutely necessary to atone for sin, and to bring in everlasting righteousness for the sinner. In one respect, Socinians act consistently in denying the Saviour's atonement ; they have sufficient penetration to see that if they once admitted him to be a sacrifice for sin, they must, as a necessary consequence, admit the divinity of his person ; therefore they deny both.

No merely human sacrifice could possibly reach the case of fallen man ; indeed, according to the constitution of the adamic covenant, no mere man could have been innocent. A merely human sacrifice would have been of less worth than the sacrifice of a bull or a goat ; the reason is evident —these were not the subjects of moral evil. Man, in transgressing the law of God, forfeited infinite good, and merited infinite evil ; justice therefore required that an infinite person should suffer in his stead ; the same justice required that the obedience of the surety should be human, and it was both human and divine.

There is something in the vicarious sufferings of the Saviour that absorbs every thing else . there is nothing to be compared to it ; it is the master-piece of Deity ! When we contemplate this interesting subject, every thing else vanishes

into the shade immediately, as the moon and stars hide themselves when the sun ascends above the horizon. Vicarious sufferings originated wholly with God, man never could have thought of any such thing. I was lately reading one of the sermons of that excellent man, Robert Hall; in which he seems to assert that man may in certain cases *adopt* vicarious sufferings; that the guilty may be punished by man in the person of another. No! this is contrary to the law of God. It is not the privilege of created being to punish by substitution; this is the sole prerogative of Deity, and it is easily proved. What does the law of God say, "The guilty shall be punished, the innocent shall not." I was surprised that so good and great a man did not sift his subject through and through; but I must add that I was richly gratified in reading the other part which treated of the Saviour's sufferings; for there is something in the obedience of the Son of God that is eminently calculated to calm and purify a guilty conscience; and this will eventually be the effect. The guilty conscience of a sinner is destined to be the most glorious temple of the living God; more glorious than that which exists in the bosom of any angel of light. Why? Because he is acquitted from every charge, and invested with the righteousness of Jesus Christ. The obedience of a finite being, though free from transgression, is infinitely less glorious

than the law which requires his obedience ; we see this in the clearest manner in the light of the sacrifice of a divine person. It was said of him that he should “magnify the law and make it honourable.” The Saviour, by his obedience, has proved that the dimensions of the law of God are the dimensions of Deity himself ! He gave himself as a divine person ; it was not a body and a soul abstractedly considered, but a body and soul united to a divine person—a divine person united to a human body and a human soul. Christ in all his glory as God-man was a sacrifice for sin. His obedience, then, must constitute the *material* of our righteousness. Jehovah in the precept ; Jehovah in the curse ; the infinite worth of Deity in the sufferings of humanity ! If we were more spiritual than we are, these things would occupy our thoughts morning, noon, and night ; they would sink us in the dust at the foot of the cross, and at the same time exalt us in our covenant head and representative above the skies. We should spend our days in the delightful and triumphant anticipation of that glory which is in the presence of God, and of those pleasures which are at his right hand for evermore. The promise is, “They shall drink of the river of thy pleasure.” We should begin to slake our thirst for perfection on this side eternity. It is an evident truth and we see it clearly in the light of divine revelation, that God intends that his family shall

eventually and for ever drink from every source of perfection from which he drinks ; every source of bliss that inhabits the bosom of God will be an eternal source of happiness to all his faithful followers.

The obedience of the Saviour proves that the curse of the law is as holy, and as necessary as the command. The Lord could not give a command without a sentence. We find that both are here equally great and glorious !

When we view the law of the land in the execution of the murderer in all its bearings, we must be grateful to God for living in a country where the assassin cannot escape with impunity ; for whenever he is proved to be guilty, he is hanged. Why ? The law, in the execution of a criminal, is raising an adamantine fortress around the innocent millions of the king's subjects. And when we consider the countless worlds God has called into existence, and the innumerable subjects which he may have throughout the regions of infinite space, I cannot but think that their attention will eventually be directed to the Saviour and what he has done. His obedience unto death presents us with a new era in the government of the Almighty ; as a covenant head he has magnified the law, and made it honourable ; he has presented the law with that obedience to its command, and with that glory to its curse which it required.

2. Consider the condemnation of sin: "God sending his son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh. Behold the infinite wisdom as well as the infinite mercy of God, first in transferring our sin to Christ, and afterwards the condemnation of the *sinner* to his *sin*! True, indeed, that condemnation arrested the Son of God, but it is equally true that sin was condemned in his condemnation! Surely there must be something in sin that eludes our notice, when we consider that the means provided for its condemnation, and afterwards for its destruction, involved all the glory of the divine perfections. Sin is described in Scripture as being enmity against God. It seeks, with all its energies, and they are mighty, far beyond the calculation of finite minds—first the destruction of God, and by necessary consequence the destruction of universal being. This is what sin is, but it is in the death of Jesus Christ that it is fully demonstrated. That monster which had devoured countless millions, was destroyed in its attempt to destroy the Lord of life and glory! The sting of death is sin. O death! I will be thy plague. O grave! I will be thy destruction.

In the crucifixion of Christ we learn God's hatred of sin. Sin is so obnoxious to God that he is determined to punish it; indeed all his perfections require him to do so. God's hatred of sin will be evinced throughout eternity; but we



do not see the whole of his hatred to sin, till we behold it exhibited in the punishment of his own Son. When sin was imputed to the Saviour, it is not presumption to say, that he could not possibly deliver himself; so that the saying of the Jews, "He saved others, himself he cannot save," involves a truth of the first and last importance. When sin was imputed to the Son of God, it was inconsistent with the divine perfections to deliver him from the hands of justice. If sin in imputation required justice done to it, surely the unbelieving sinner cannot escape punishment in another world. Is there a thoughtless individual present, who dreams of escaping with impunity hereafter? Let me reason with you for a moment. If you escape with impunity, God will proclaim to the universe, that he has been infinitely unjust to his own Son! I hope that the majority of those who hear me have been too well taught of God, to be led astray by such delusions.

The Saviour, by his obedience unto death, has extracted the curse. The apostle says, "The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law." It is sin that puts it in the power of the law to curse; but the curse has been extracted for all those who believe in Christ." There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit." "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again,

who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us ;” (Rom. viii. 1, 34 ;) and this explains what the apostle says in another passage ; “ Now it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.” (Rom. vii. 17.) He does not mean to exculpate himself ; but his meaning is, that it was not sin that issued in his condemnation, but sin that, ended in its own destruction. That which is death to sin, is invariably life to the sinner ; and that which is life to sin, is death to the sinner. But sin is doomed to destruction. The monster was condemned by God himself in the Saviour’s bosom. It was attacked by him in its desert, and in this respect it was condemned and executed in his own bosom. In the times of the ancient Romans, the method of punishing criminals was to lead them to the summit of the Tarpeian rock, and cast them down ; this was an awful death, and many a criminal must have agonized before he fell. But follow me now to Calvary, and behold infinitely more than you ever perused in Grecian or Roman history. See the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, leading the criminal sin to the summit of the Rock of Ages, and casting the monster down the precipice into the abyss of infinity and eternity ; but this must ever be borne in mind, the monster in its descent must travel through our bosoms individually to be annihilated in its guilt, pollution,

and existence ! What, my dear brethren, do we know of this death ? O ! if we did justice to the glorious realities of our holy religion, none of the things of time and sense would move us, but we should live in the very atmosphere of heaven, live as much above the good as the evil of life ; we should pitch our tents at the very gate of heaven, ever ready, when it pleased the God of mercy to summon us hence, to step from time into eternity. Had not sin been condemned and executed in the bosom of Messiah, it would never have been condemned and executed in any other bosom. But we see the Saviour as mediator between God and man, with one hand presenting the Father with all the glories of his law, and with the other presenting the sinner with a righteousness comprising equal glory ; that God and man might be reconciled, and preserved in a state of reconciliation for ever and ever ! There is a sublimity of truth in those two lines of Erskine's, which cannot be sufficiently admired.

“ On mercy's door this motto's grav'd,  
Let sin be damned, the sinner sav'd.”

IV. Consider THE BLESSINGS RESULTING FROM THE OBEDIENCE OF CHRIST. “ That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit.”

1. First, a perfect righteousness. The righteousness with which the church of God is to

be invested for ever, was not the exclusive work of the Saviour's sufferings; this everlasting righteousness was the work of his life here below; it was begun even in the womb when he assumed pure humanity; nor was it completed till he resigned his spirit into the hands of his Father and his God, and cried out upon the cross, "It is finished." Nothing less than that righteousness which comprised the divine attributes in all their glory, in the graces of humanity, could reach our case. This righteousness comprises all the glory of God's mercy, and all the glory of his vengeance. It comprises the destruction of the hell we deserve; and the creation of that heaven into which none of the angelic hosts can enter. Pause for a moment, and consider the glories of that individual, even here on earth, who is invested with the righteousness of Christ. It is incalculable; no one but the divine mind can do justice to it. When we contemplate the high honour conferred upon us by God, it has an immediate tendency to humble us in his presence in dust and ashes. God grant that it may have this effect upon us individually!

The imputation of the Saviour's righteousness is as full to us, as the imputation of our sins was to him. "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." (2 Cor. v. 21.) The imputation is equal in both cases. The

Saviour was treated precisely as if he had been guilty, in his own person, of the sins imputed to him; and every believer is treated by God as a judge, as if he had in his own person atoned for sin, and wrought out an everlasting righteousness. A contrary supposition would lead us into endless absurdity. It is impossible that a sinner can be acquitted by halves, and an impossibility for God to justify by halves; we must be wholly forgiven, and fully justified, or not at all. The righteousness of Christ, then, imputed by God to the sinner, and the blessing at the same time received by faith, makes that righteousness as completely his own, as if it had been possible for him to have accomplished it himself. In this respect the church of God will leave the angelic hosts far behind; they are destined to wear their own righteousness, but the church of God is destined to wear the righteousness of Deity himself for ever and ever! And here let me ask you, my dear brethren, do you know what it is to be invested with this glorious righteousness? If so, consider the high honour conferred upon you by the Almighty himself. Men will frequently do, or suffer, many things, to obtain the praise of their fellow creatures; some have toiled thirty or forty years, and even the whole of their lives, and for what?—for the adulation of worms like themselves. O wretched immortality! If I am to be ambitious of praise, let me court the praise

of my God, by cultivating his own image—by doing justice to that blood which cleanses from all sin; to that righteousness which justifies from every charge; and to that Holy Spirit who strengthens for every duty, and for every suffering, till I am eventually made holy as God is holy, and perfect as he is perfect.

2. Another blessing is a principle of obedience to be conferred upon the believer; that principle afterwards to be developed in his life. If it be true that the righteousness of Christ involved the condemnation of sin in the Saviour's bosom, it is equally true that the same righteousness, worn by the believer, must involve the condemnation of sin in his bosom; unless it did this, it would be derogatory to the divine attributes, and worse than useless to the sinner. The believer, then, is justified in the righteousness of Christ, that sin may perish for ever in his bosom. Happy they who are daily conversant with these things.

But it is time that we should ask ourselves individually whether sin has been condemned in our consciences; condemned in such a manner, that we are obliged to have recourse to the Saviour to obtain his righteousness, that we may be delivered from every charge, and be inspired with his Holy Spirit to fight against the enemy to the day of death. We should be ambitious of doing justice to this most interesting of all sub-



jects. God never appears in all his glories till he takes the field of battle against sin : he then appears in all the beauty, and in all the loveliness of his perfection. What then must be the honour conferred on that individual who is first invested with the righteousness of Christ, and then led to the field of battle, armed with the strength of his God, to oppose the parent of all evils—the monster sin ! The execution of this enemy is to be the work of the believer, as long as he is on this side the grave. Show me an honest Christian ; the proof of his integrity I ask for is, that he be daily engaged in the crucifixion of sin. O my dear brethren, it is a difficult thing for a minister to preach the pure truth of God in such a manner as to encourage the weak, and at the same time to check the presumptuous. The Spirit of God alone can enable him to perform this important work. Let me urge you then to arm yourselves with the Lord your God for warfare ; there will be some trial internal or external as long as you live in this vale of tears, till eventually the finishing stroke of perfection will be given by the hand of God himself.

Consider now how faith satisfies the law.

There is a principle of divine integrity in faith which first of all assents to the law of God, that it is holy, just, and good ; it then applies it to the conscience, and man condemns himself ;—here is honesty ! The believer echoes the just

condemnation of the law of God ; the language of his heart is, ‘ The Almighty would have been just had he consigned me to everlasting perdition.’ Do we know what this justice is ? do we know what it is to acquit God ? and not only so, but to justify him in the condemnation of his enemies ? Faith honours the law as a covenant, precisely as the Saviour himself honoured it ; honoured the command and the curse,—this was never done before : faith then laying hold of the righteousness of Christ, which justifies from every charge, honours the curse of the law, as well as the command : there is, therefore, more glory in the weakest child of God exercising the obedience of faith, than in the obedience of the angelic hosts above. Faith connects the believer with the Saviour. It is no less than that very principle laying hold of the blessing, which led the Saviour a voluntary victim to the cross, to atone for sin, and to bring in everlasting righteousness ; it is one and the same principle—a principle emanating from the perfections of Deity. Viewed in this light, faith becomes a mighty principle of action, by which the law is established more effectually than ever. Faith fixes the law of God where God would have it, and gives it all the dimensions of Deity himself. See how easy it is to connect the justification of a sinner with his sanctification. The material of his justification before God as a criminal, is the obedience of Jesus Christ. But

when faith lays hold of this, it subsequently becomes a sanctifying principle ; the law of God is immediately honoured as a rule ;—and what besides ? Faith looks forward through the vista of futurity, and fixes its eye on that perfection, which is a blessing to be conferred in due time ; was provided for us from eternity ; and is destined to live to eternity.

Faith looks from the righteousness to the image of God, while the believer is made to see and feel that the Saviour died not only to purchase a righteousness, but also to confer his own image as a blessing. The righteousness that justifies involves the principle that purifies, and that principle the work of Deity ; they are both the purchase of the same blood, for when the Saviour brought in everlasting righteousness, he purchased righteousness in principle for all who believe in him. Without noticing this, I do not see how we can do justice to the text : “ That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit.” Fulfilled first as a covenant in the imputation of Christ’s righteousness, and afterwards as a rule in the impartation of his image.

In another point of view, we see how faith honours the law ; it trusts the Saviour fully from a principle of obedience. “ In the Lord,” saith the psalmist, “ have I righteousness and strength :” righteousness to justify, and strength to preserve

me, notwithstanding every obstacle which men or devils can present.

God is as fully engaged as a legislator in saving man, as he is as a sovereign; it is not erroneous to say, that all the glories of his legislation, as well as all the glories of his sovereignty, are engaged. The sovereignty of God does not save, but in human obedience; a righteousness was wrought out for us in the obedience of Christ, which was both human and divine. It will be in vain to talk of the justifying righteousness of Christ, while we are insulting the righteousness of his holy law in our lives. The Saviour tells us what the doom of such professors of religion will be; "Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity;" while at the same time he will invite others to his eternal presence, specifying their obedience here below—that obedience the effect of being justified in the righteousness of Christ. I need not tell those who are conversant with their own hearts, that God does not bring his own elect together by transporting them to eternity, to peruse the volume of his decrees; this is an absurdity as well as an impossibility. It is in the obedience of faith that we are to learn our interest in the covenant of grace from eternity to eternity. We ought to study well in the school of repentance and faith, before we enter the university of predestination.

But to apply this subject. Is there a self-

righteous individual present? See the impossibility of being saved in a self-righteous principle. The law requires of you, all that it required of the Saviour. Its precepts must be fully honoured; you must therefore call into existence as glorious a being as the Lord Jesus Christ. What then becomes of doing your best, as it is called, and leaving God to do the rest? Will it become the perfections of the Almighty to amend your *worst*? This is really and truly the result of an analysis of your creed.

Is there a licentious individual present? Truth presents itself to such an one in the most awful manner that it can present itself to a mortal. It is worse than useless; it is self-deception to talk of the mercy of God, which will but aggravate your case. I have spoken of the terrors of the law—but the rejected gospel will be more sensible to the unrepenting sinner than the violated law. The gospel involves a higher sanction than the law itself: for this reason, the perfections of the gospel are more fully developed; new motives of action, and new blessings are presented to every one who hears it. Consider these things, I beseech you, that you may be armed against the fashionable creed of the day, that one religion is as good as another; that you may see and feel that if we perish, we must be of all men the most miserable!

3. Another blessing is the glorious triumph of

the believer. He who is united to Christ has no need to dread any of the curses of the law; he is dead to the law, as a covenant. This death to the law involves a conviction of its absolute purity, both in its command and, its curse: driving the believer from it as a covenant, to seek and find an everlasting righteousness in his covenant head and representative, Jesus Christ, who presents him with the law as a *rule of life*, and at the same time with a principle that embraces that rule. He thus dies to the law as a covenant, that he may live unto God. Living unto God necessarily comprises dying to sin, and he cannot die to sin, without dying to the law as a covenant. The Holy Spirit separates from the law as a covenant, and unites to Christ; thus the apostle says, "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Notwithstanding the believer's weakness, when he comes to do justice to the provisions of God's holy covenant, he has every possible encouragement; for all that is required of him as a duty, is provided for him as a blessing: hence that elasticity of mind which he possesses, when comprehensively conversant with the whole truth of God. He relies upon the provisions of that everlasting covenant, in the enjoyment of which David died triumphantly, notwithstanding his fall. "He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure; and this is all my salvation, for all my de-



sire." (2 Sam. xxiii. 5.) Is it so with us? We should endeavour to apply every part of divine truth to ourselves, and if we honestly endeavour, we shall not altogether fail.

In being conformed to Christ, we are, and ever must be conformed to the law of Christ; hence the apostle tells us, "he was under the law to Christ;" and we are further informed in divine writ, that the Saviour "died unto sin once, but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God." He is conformed to the law as a rule at the present moment; his glorified humanity will necessarily be subject to the Father for ever. Conformity to Christ is the highest honour that can be conferred upon the family of God; they will all eventually, and for ever be made like him, who died for them; like him, as he is in the presence of God in his glorified humanity; like him, in all the glories of the divine perfections! Look forward then to eternity, peruse the high destiny of the family of Heaven, and endeavour to do justice to your privilege. What an honour is it to live unto God! More than this cannot be said of saints and angels, who are before his throne in glory. Living to God is neither more nor less than living as God lives. He lives to himself every moment. If we live to him, we enter more or less into his purity, and by necessary consequence into his bliss. This does not in the least degree militate against what I

have said, that there is a principle to be mortified daily ; and while crucifying this, the believer looks forward with delightful anticipation to that period when he will be wholly free from it.

See then how the law and the gospel will both be eternally glorified in the redemption and salvation of the believer. Both, in all their glories, will fill and pervade heaven for ever and ever. The law not only fulfilled as a covenant by the Saviour in working out an everlasting righteousness for his family, but that family eternally conformed to it as a rule of rectitude ; in other words, eternal conformity to God himself ! Thus the law and the gospel, though distinct from each other in one point of view, must be identified. The different doctrines of our holy religion may be justly compared to the primary colours of light, which may be distinguished, but cannot be separated : they form one glorious whole : they are the primary colours of light now descending upon a once benighted world, from the full disk of the Sun of righteousness ! What a beautiful theme is the mystery of salvation ; when the intellect and the heart travel into it, wonders upon wonders ceaselessly rise, till the soul is wafted into heaven itself, to revel, like Leviathan, in its own element ! Nothing can fully engross the human intellect, and the human heart, but divine truth ; God himself appearing in all the glories of his perfections, in the redemption and salvation of ruined

man. May we feel this truth as we ought to feel it, that our prayer may be "Carry on to perfection the work thou hast begun in us:" this prayer will ascend to the ears of our infinitely merciful God, in the intercession of Jesus Christ, and we shall receive an answer involving God himself!

## SERMON XXIII.

## THE ETERNAL GOD A REFUGE.

DEUT. xxxiii. 27.

*The Eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are  
the everlasting arms.*

THE redemption and salvation of fallen man is no ordinary work. We see the perfections of God, in every thing that surrounds us ; but we never discover all his beauty, all his excellency, all his glory, till we behold him as the Redeemer, the Saviour, and the Sanctifier of man.

“ Thy shoes shall be iron and brass, and as thy days so shall thy strength be.” I need not tell you that the garments of the Israelites did not wear out during their journey. The promise was given to them by God, and God fulfilled his promise by his creative power, miraculously displayed. It becomes peculiarly interesting to us, when we consider it as involving a typical

blessing. He will never leave nor forsake his family, but continue to do them good, not only to the end of time, but through the revolving ages of eternity.

“There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun,” none to be compared to him. It is a difficult thing to convince many of this, who are in the habit of falling down, and worshipping dumb idols. The truth is, that none of the sons and daughters of Adam have any knowledge of God till they know him, in their hearts, in all his saving energy. We may believe in the existence of a God, but we do no more, until he makes himself known to us in his Son Jesus Christ.

“The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.” The cities of refuge were typical of Christ, and of the blessings which a covenant God confers upon his family even here below. He is their refuge from first to last; and he is so, as being the eternal God.

The idea of eternity is overwhelming to us. If we endeavour to travel back to eternity past, we sink under the mighty effort; and if we endeavour to look forward to eternity to come, we are overwhelmed with the same difficulty. We shall never be able fully to bear the idea of it, until we have bid adieu to these frail tabernacles of clay, and are safe, and conscious of our safety, in the eternal God for ever.

GOD IS AN ETERNAL BEING, WHOLLY A STRANGER TO A BEGINNING, AND TO AN END.

1. He is an independent being—infinately and eternally independent of all others. An independent being must necessarily be eternal. No one can possibly have existed before him. No one can possibly so exist as to interrupt his existence in the least degree. He possesses the whole of being every moment of time.

The description given us of God by the prophet Isaiah is exceedingly interesting; his infinite condescension being connected with the eternity of his essence; “Thus saith the high and lofty one that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy:” we are then assured that he enthrones himself in the bosom of him “that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.” (Isa. lvii. 15.) The Eternal inhabiting time! The Eternal inhabiting finite being! How can we comprehend these things? Every finite being is necessarily immeasurably removed from infinite. Every finite being is far more nearly related to nothing, than to independent essence. When we acknowledge the independence of God, we immediately acknowledge that he is infinitely superior to all other beings.

2. All the perfections of Deity are unsuccessive; this is not true of any finite being. We learn something of Deity by contrasting him per-



petually with finite essence. Every thing in created being is successive : our bodies are perpetually changing ; and we have only to attend to the working of our minds, to discover that one idea flows unceasingly from another. Not so with God : he was from eternity what he is at present. We sometimes form a very erroneous idea of eternity, as if it were a something independent of Deity. And what can this be ? Eternity is one of the necessary attributes of God : properly speaking, when we are thinking of eternity, we are thinking of the eternal being. A finite being is not at the present moment of time, what he was in the past ; nor will he be in the future, what he is at the present moment. What is finite being in all its glories ? A ceaseless emanation from Deity. Philosophers tell us truly, that preservation in existence is the result of a ceaseless exercise of creative power.

3. It follows necessarily that, God is underived ; And here we have another striking contrast. If he be underived, then he must be possessed of every absolute excellence. You have only to pause for a few moments, and do justice to this interesting object, and you will find that finite being cannot possibly exist from eternity ; nothing less than infinite excellence can exist from eternity to eternity.

4. God is the parent and preserver of all finite beings : and this proves in the clearest manner,

that he is eternal. All are dependent on him, and all equally so; the highest intelligence of heaven, as well as the dust we tread on; there is no difference; all creatures are in this respect on a perfect level—all equally dependent upon God.

But how do we learn this truth? Primarily from Scripture. And it is a truth, overwhelming and incomprehensible as it is, upon which are founded the comfort, consolation, and triumph of every believer.

In Scripture, the eternity of God is again and again insisted on. Of Abraham we read, that he worshipped the everlasting God. The Psalmist in describing him says, "From everlasting to everlasting thou art God." Job dwells upon the same truth, fully and freely. The book of Job is very interesting in many respects: all that the best metaphysicians have advanced is fairly deducible from it.

As the Eternal, possessing independence, the only one whose name is, "I am"—he fills and pervades not only time, but every second of time, and inhabits infinite space.

But, how can God be said to pervade every moment of time? The answer is easy and obvious. He possesses the whole of being; the whole of essence is his exclusive possession, and ever must be. If he possesses the whole of es-

sence at this moment, he fills every second of time, while he inhabits eternity.

In Scripture eternal attributes are ascribed to God.

1. Eternal power is exclusively ascribed to him ; he is almighty—omnipotent.

2. But it may be asked, In what does his eternity become peculiarly interesting to us ? In his mercy.

Angels know his goodness, and doubtless are conscious that they have an eternal interest in it. This blessing must have been imparted to them in a promise—they are certain of it, and the promise given to them involves the eternal God himself in the fulfilment of it. “The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children’s children ; to such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them.” (Ps. ciii. 17, 18.) Here the believer finds his interest in the everlasting God full of the richest consolation. Could he look forward to the lapse of millions of ages, and then anticipate the possibility of being left to himself, even for a moment, he knows perfectly well that he must fall. The tendency of finite being is, perpetually to sink into its original nothingness. God not only upholds all creation in being ; but he upholds his angels and his saints in well-being. The

glories of his essence, as developed in upholding them in well-being, give us a far higher view of the divine perfections, than the exercise of the power which keeps them in existence. He keeps the devil and lost spirits in existence, and will do so for ever; but his own family he not only keeps in existence, but sustains them in purity and bliss.

It follows, from what I am telling you, that it is absolutely necessary to know ourselves, or we cannot know God. It is in learning our own wants, our own sinfulness, that we become acquainted with God; and these are the schools, the universities, in which God educates his family, and prepares them for the most blissful communion with himself in heaven.

Do not be afraid of being taught to know yourselves, by whatever painful discipline it may be. God sometimes shakes, (if I may so speak), some of his children, over the bottomless pit, gives them accurate ideas of the evils of sin, and makes them feel something like a foretaste of hell, that they may learn to love, prize, and delight in that God whose mercy is like himself, from everlasting to everlasting.

I refer you to the 136th Psalm, where we find every thing we witness declared to be the offspring of mercy; and to be upheld in mercy. The 23d verse is peculiarly interesting to us,

“ Who remembered us in our low estate, for his mercy endureth for ever.”

It is my firm opinion that universal being will, in some respect or other, be made subservient to the church of God. Could you ask the sun in the firmament of heaven, at the present moment, why he is suspended there, and in what he is most gloriously engaged ? The reply would certainly be, in blessing with his light and influence the family of God in their journey through time into eternity.

3. Everlasting government is ascribed to God.” “ The Lord shall reign for ever and ever.” (Ex. xv. 18.)

4. Everlasting counsel. “ The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.” (Ps. xxxiii. 11.)

5. The covenant is “ an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure.” (2 Sam. xxiii. 5.) Eternity, in all its glories, is the parent of all our blessings, and will be likewise the preserver of them.

6. Eternal glory is ascribed to God ; and why ? Because he is the sole Creator and Preserver of all things ; and, because we must be dependent upon him for ever, as dependent in heaven as we are now.

But it is in the person and work of his Son Jesus Christ that the eternity of God is fully

developed, and most clearly manifested. Nothing could raise humanity from the ruins of the fall but eternity. Nothing could raise humanity from the wreck of sin but unity with eternity ; while union with the Eternal proves evidently the high destinies of that humanity to live for ever ! And here, wonder upon wonder present themselves to our consideration. The Eternal becomes united to a child of time ; the Eternal united to his intellect and feeling ; the Eternal giving birth to him, in all the glory of that innocence in which he was born in Bethlehem.

In the light of this truth the believer's heart is broken ; his attention is directed to the person of the Son, while yet an infant of days, and there he sees the eternal God. He sees Deity embracing humanity, and uniting it to himself, and all his perfections.

The *power* of God is most conspicuously displayed in the work of the Son. It is, indeed, displayed in every thing we behold ; but, the most glorious manifestation of it, is in the death of Jesus Christ. The humanity of the Son was upheld by infinite power in the depths of our hell. Sin, the monster that had for ever destroyed every being, had it not been for God, assailed him in all its rage. Sin never found a victim in whose bosom it could bury all its fangs, till it found humanity united to Deity. Here we learn what sin is, and here we learn who and



what Deity is ! Here we find eternal power opposing moral evil in its penal consequences. We see infinite being and finite being arrayed against each other. The soul of man was the prize for which they contended ; each would have his own. The sin of men and devils raged to the uttermost ; the powers of darkness assailed the Saviour, and doubtless inflicted on him more pain than they could have done on any other being. At the same time, the vengeance of Jehovah raged in all its horrors within his human bosom, a bosom like our own. And how are we to account for his glorious triumph ? His eternal power and god-head carried him triumphantly through his sufferings.

The Eternal found no field on which he could fully meet his enemies, till he found the bosom of humanity. The Eternal found no field on which he could meet his and our enemies, until, in all the glory of his strength, he met them in all the weakness of finite being. Here the eternity of God evinces itself !

The eternal *love* of God appears in the Son's gift of himself : he gave an eternal person to suffer for us. The same love appears, the same mercy displays itself, in the Father's gift of the Son.

The eternal *truth* of Deity is manifested to us, also, in the person and work of the Son of God.

Is the *mercy* of the Lord according to his own

declaration, from everlasting to everlasting? See it written at full-length in the bosom of Deity. See justice armed with all its glories seizing an eternal victim, and presenting him to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Is the *wrath* of God eternal, and are his enemies doomed to suffer that wrath? Most assuredly. We peruse this truth, in all its awful dimensions, in the gift of Christ. The sacrifice of a divine, of an eternal person, must necessarily exclude all mercy from those who reject the Son. The sacrifice of a divine person proves clearly, that the vengeance of God will pursue his enemies through the countless ages of eternity.

The eternity of God is revealed to us in the covenant offices of the Holy Spirit; and in this point of view, becomes peculiarly interesting to us.

God, in one respect, as a sin-avenging God, in the sacrifice of his Son, has certainly fulfilled for ever one of his covenant engagements, and the same may be said of the Son when he presented himself to his Father. But the Holy Spirit, in consequence of the sacrifice of Christ, has covenanted to raise those naturally dead in trespasses and sins to a new and endless life, which life involves in it the image of Deity in all his beauty.

It is not simply and exclusively in what he

tells us, that God makes known his perfections ; they are destined, evidently, to be developed in our bosoms for ever, after we have ceased to sin, and have done with all sorrow, when we shall revel in an ocean of uncreated bliss, and experience the absolute necessity of being upheld by eternal perfections every moment.

Let us now learn a few lessons of the highest importance.

1. Learn the glory and the majesty of Messiah. Peruse them in the fulfilment of his offices. A God envelopes himself in all the misery, and in all the shame, due to you and to me. Remember what I have often told you before, that it was not the humanity of the Son of God exclusively that interposed, but his Deity as well as his humanity ; *a divine person* : it is not only true, that hell raged in the bosom of humanity, but it is equally true that it raged in the bosom of Deity ; and this is the reason why sin was triumphed over : infinite, omnipotent, and eternal, he was therefore impassive, and able to annihilate the enemy.

2. See the everlasting honours conferred on humanity. It is united to the Eternal, and therefore destined to reign in union with Deity for ever and ever.

When Deity first interposed between man and the sinfulness of the progeny of Adam, sin, in its pollution, was removed to an infinite and eternal

distance: when he triumphed on the cross, the curse of sin was removed to an equal distance.

Behold the person of Jesus Christ; see not only the essence, but likewise the worth of Deity, interposing between humanity and sin and ruin; thus preserved in, and by, all the perfections of the everlasting God.

3. Behold, in him, an earnest of the purity, bliss, and triumph of all his brethren. According to the tenor of the covenant of the Eternal Three, sin and all its consequences will be eventually removed as far from the brethren of Christ as from Christ himself: the eternal God has taken the work in hand. Let me repeat the delightful truth, which we learn in perusing the fulfilment of the covenant offices of Father, Son, and Spirit: sin, and all its consequences will, in the end, be as far removed from every individual believer, as it is from the essence of Deity. How glorious will be the triumph of the church of God in eternity!

Believers are united to Christ at the present moment, and in being united to Christ, they are united to all the perfections of God.

4. Learn the vanity of all created being, and in necessary connexion with it, the folly of seeking our portion in that which will avail us nothing in a very short time. Man was created originally for God—for the Eternal—for the friend-

ship of, and communion with, God himself. The eternal God, then, must be our refuge individually.

5. Learn, again, the high destinies of those who are interested in him,—of the weakest, as well as of the strongest. The Saviour himself has said, “Because I live, ye shall live also.” “He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.” “I give unto them eternal life.” (John xiv. 19; vi. 47; x. 28.) The life of the Eternal himself is the source of theirs.

6. Lastly, Learn the awful miseries of those of whom this God is the enemy. We make God our enemy in exact proportion to our wilful transgression against him. God never made himself the enemy of any being. This is impossible; it is inconsistent with his perfections. The work of hatred and destruction is the work of the creature exclusively; the enmity of God traces its pedigree to the sin of the creature. But, after the present dispensation is closed, the proffer of mercy will never be made again. “Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire.”

Is, then, the eternal God my friend or my enemy? On this depends my welfare in time and in eternity. This is an awfully important question. May God, of his infinite goodness, teach us to solve it satisfactorily within our own bosoms.

The eternal God, in the infinite plenitude of

his glory, proposes himself as a God of mercy to all who hear the gospel.

Do not, my brethren, draw wrong inferences from the covenant of God ; do not abuse any of these truths. Many, when they hear of the covenant of eternity, are disposed to quarrel with it ; they foolishly imagine that it comprises destruction as well as salvation. The covenant of eternity was intended by God to meet the responsibility of man, as fully as it meets his wants. This is a truth ; and every argument that we have in its favour, is in favour of the sinner who hears the gospel. What a rich encouragement, especially when we remember that God has said, “ Call upon me in the day of trouble : I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.” (Ps. l. 15.) But, say some, this is to the elect—to the family of God. To this I answer, that all whom God leads to himself, he leads as accountable and responsible beings, and none are banished from him but those who wilfully banish themselves. And I may add, that many have approached the Lord in times of darkness, in the woes of nature, trembling on the brink of hell ; while dreading their own condemnation, they have poured forth their hearts to him : he has heard, and delivered them.

But, to the law and to the testimony. Hear what God says : “ Incline your ear, and come unto me : hear, and your soul shall live ; and I



will make an *everlasting covenant* with you, even the sure mercies of David." Consult the context, and you will see who they are, who are thus addressed. "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not?" (Isa. lv. 3, 2.)

I invite you all, then, to the Saviour of sinners, and to the arms of the eternal God, and I tell you, in his name, that you are all welcome. You say you cannot come. Fix that cannot upon *yourselves*,—remember its source, and contrast it with God's command to pray for the Holy Spirit.

Some of the most eminent divines have sifted these truths, and they acknowledge that the history of the church of Christ proves, in the clearest manner, that numbers have approached a God of mercy without any spirituality whatever. He has heard, and had mercy on them. They have prayed for deliverance from hell: he has heard them, and blessed them with his own heaven—even with himself.

The gospel is destined to meet man in the very state in which he was when the Saviour died to save him. "God commendeth his love towards us, in that, *while we were yet sinners*, Christ died for us." (Rom. v. 8.)

The commission of the minister of the gospel is, to address sinners, simply and exclusively *as sinners*, and to invite them to God, to receive every thing at his hands. True, indeed, he has

something to say to the family of God ; but it is equally true, that he has something to say to every one.

But, to conclude, with considering the influence this truth has on every individual who prizes it as he ought. He serves God ; he is desirous of serving the eternal God, as one who will eventually reward all services and sufferings, in, and with himself.

There are degrees of glory in heaven ; infants die, and are taken to heaven,—they cannot know all that you and I know. The Saviour is exalted above his fellows ; that exaltation involves in it the discipline he went through while here on earth. We shall carry the remembrance of every thing with us into heaven—the remembrance of sin forgiven ; this, of course, will kindle a flame of love to God, destined to live for ever. God himself must live in it. We shall be grateful to him for the feeble services we have been enabled to render him while here on earth.

I am fully persuaded of the great importance of being ardently desirous of knowing as much as we possibly can of God, while here below, and to aim at serving him delightfully, with all the powers of the soul. Live, then, as beholding the invisible and eternal God. We may behold him in the perfections which he has displayed in the person and work of his son : and, indeed, we behold him, though in a smaller degree, and with

fainter lustre, in every thing he does for, and in his family. Live, then, every moment with the Eternal in view, as if every day, every moment, were the last to be spent below. We do not know what the pleasures of this life are till we realize this blessing. We do not know how to live, till we are prepared to die. We do not do justice to any thing till we do justice to a God of mercy.

May you and I live in this manner, and have the eternal God, with all the provisions and blessings of his covenant perpetually in view; we shall then, and then only, know how to use all the creatures of God as we ought, and to extract every good from them, which God meant to impart to us: we shall know that “the eternal God is our refuge, and that underneath are the everlasting arms.” We shall then be prepared either for life, or for death, as it may be the good pleasure of the will of the Most High.

## SERMON XXIV.

## THE CITIES OF REFUGE.

## PSALM lxxi. 7.

*I am as a wonder unto many; but thou art my strong refuge.*

WE shall find from the context that these words are applicable to our Lord Jesus Christ, and also to his church. David was not only a type of Christ, but also of the church of Christ. "Deliver me in thy righteousness, and cause me to escape: incline thine ear unto me, and save me. Be thou my strong habitation, whereunto I may continually resort: thou hast given commandment to save me; for thou art my rock and my fortress. Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked, out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man."

The Saviour was evidently delivered, but not till he had paid the uttermost farthing. His family will be delivered without a single exception.

“For thou art my hope, O Lord God, thou art my trust from my youth.” “By thee have I been holden up from the womb : thou art he that took me out of my mother’s bowels : my praise shall be continually of thee.” By referring to the 139th Psalm, fifteenth and sixteenth verses, and comparing them with other scriptures, you will see that these words are applicable to the Saviour and to his family.

“I am as a wonder unto many ; but thou art my strong refuge.”

Almost every thing in the Jewish polity was, in some respect or other, typical of the Saviour. This may be very easily educed from Scripture without the aid, in the least degree, of a fanciful imagination. The Lord is spoken of and addressed as a refuge again and again ; and probably his worshippers, in doing so, alluded to the cities of refuge. There were six of them ; three on one side of Jordan, and three on the other. Many things prove that they were typical of the Saviour as a refuge from the wrath to come. They were in the exclusive possession of the Levites, in which tribe the priesthood was, under the Jewish dispensation. Foreigners, as well as Israelites, were welcome to any of the cities of refuge.

Casual homicide exposed an individual to death. The avenger of blood might arrest him and put him to death wherever he found him ; but if he once escaped to a city of refuge, he was safe.

Jewish commentators tell us that the roads were forty-eight feet broad that led to the cities of refuge ; that the utmost care was taken to preserve them in a good state, they being regularly repaired ; bridges were placed over every stream ; and at the cross ways, posts were erected with an inscription directing to the city of refuge. Every thing was done to favour the flight of the homicide ; every thing to favour the poor, the miserable, and the guilty. It proved an effectual refuge to the casual homicide after he had been examined ; then he had every benefit which the city of refuge could afford him—no one dared molest him.

It appears evident from Exodus xxi. 14, that there was another refuge besides these cities, and that was the altar of God.

#### I. Consider THE HOMICIDE.

He was one who had put another person to death, but not intentionally ; not of “ malice prepense,” as the lawyers say. No individual who had put another to death wilfully, was suffered to live. The benefit of the cities of refuge, and of the altar, was exclusively in favour of those who were only casual homicides. We are transgressors of the law of God ; we are not only suicides but homicides likewise. As long as we follow a course of iniquity, we are perpetually engaged in destroying ourselves and each other ; for the



tendency of any, or every man's conduct, is to call into existence good or evil in the bosom of those with whom he associates. Sometimes men are so depraved that they are sedulously engaged in this infernal work. But we shall never be able fully to view sin till we leave these tabernacles of clay. We shall then be enabled, each for himself, whether inhabitants of heaven or of hell, to weigh our own transgressions in the balances of the sanctuary, and view them for ever in the light of God himself.

In this respect, we are like the homicide, guilty ; and far more so. There are wilful transgressions, numberless as the sands of the seashore, recorded against us ; unless these be cancelled by the infinitely precious blood of Christ, we must perish.

## II. THE AVENGER OF BLOOD.

He was next of kin to the individual put to death. God is not only nearly related to us, but to all whom we can possibly injure. Divine vengeance is the avenger of blood. God in his holy law, in its curses and in its commands, is pursuing every one of his enemies ; he will overtake them, sooner or later, and visit them with eternal destruction.

## III. THE CITIES OF REFUGE.

Some imagine that their name had a reference to the Saviour ; and, certainly, they were a type

of that blessing which is to be found in Jesus Christ exclusively.

They were so situated in the land of Judea, that homicide could not be committed in any part of it, but within a certain convenient distance from the cities of refuge. How sweetly does this accord with the gracious dealings of him who is “not willing that any should perish!” Destruction does not flow from God, but from the creature. To prove that God wills the destruction of any individual, we must first of all prove that God wills his sins. But who would undertake to prove this—to transfer sin from themselves to God. Yet it has been attempted. This is one way of hardening the human heart into adamant; and of making man altogether insensible to sin and its consequences, till he tumbles headlong down the precipice of eternity, and awakes, like Dives, in the flames of hell. It would appear from the history of that unhappy man, that he never thought of God till he was in hell.

There were six cities of refuge in Judea. We have only one—Jesus Christ! But the refuge we have in him is infinitely sufficient, as God is present every where, not only as an absolute Deity, but as a Saviour. This is the reason why he addresses all, and says, “Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.” (Isa. xlv. 22.) He is the refuge appointed by God himself, for he fulfils, by divine appointment, all his

covenant offices. "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." (Rom. iii. 25, 26.)

All things are treasured up in him for the believer; for every one who seeks him as a refuge. "In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." (Col. ii. 3.) "Blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." (Eph. i. 3.)

#### IV. THE FLIGHT OF THE HOMICIDE.

He was obliged to forsake every thing; his home, his family, his acquaintance, his business or profession, every thing was to be forsaken; and he was to keep one thing exclusively in view, if he had any idea of preserving his life; namely, the city of refuge!

This is strikingly illustrative of the Christian; in principle he must leave all things—husband and wife, father and mother, brother and sister, houses and land; the soul must ascend above every earthly consideration, or it never can seek and find a refuge in the Lord Jesus Christ. And, indeed, when a sinner is deeply awakened by the Spirit of the living God, when he peruses the

law of the Almighty, with the eye of God; he is then really alarmed, and finds himself under the necessity of leaving all behind him, and of thinking only of one object—of him “who is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him.” (Heb. vii. 25.)

It is obvious then from what I have said, that the flight of the homicide was urged by three things.

1. A consciousness of his own danger. The avenger of blood was naturally pursuing him; it was the command of God that he should put him to death. And when we consider what your feelings or mine would have been against the individual who had occasioned the death of a brother or a sister, we may easily imagine that there was no chance of the sentence not being put into execution. Man, under the influence of his own disposition, and especially when he had the express command of God, would naturally pursue the homicide, and the homicide would as naturally seek refuge.

Do you and I know what flight is? If we had violated any of the laws of the land, and if we knew that a police officer were in search of us to confine us in a prison, and if at this moment a friend were to tell us, “Fly, I will secure you; only follow my advice,”—I do not believe there is an individual who would not gladly, and instantly seek safety. But, alas! our hearts are so petri-

fied by sin, that we will not believe the testimony of God, though he tells us that his vengeance must eventually arrest us, and imprison us for ever and ever.

No one but the Almighty can give us a full description of man under the influence of transgression; and the insensibility of the transgressor is not the least thing to be considered. May God give us a deep sense of our own sinfulness, and of his loving-kindness!

2. There was no safety to be found any where but between the horns of the altar, or in the cities of refuge: there, and there only! It would have been useless had any one met him in his flight and endeavoured to turn him aside; he would have said, ‘Let me alone, I am seeking safety. I know the appointment of God himself; I have only to reach the altar, or the city of refuge, and I shall be safe.’

Do we know what it is to disregard every thing, all the seductions of time and sense, when fully in pursuit of the salvation of the immortal spirit? Or are we triflers? do we play with little sins?

This was not the case with the Jewish homicide. If we could ask one, he would tell us, “I could not turn out of my way for any thing, while travelling to the city of refuge; but you are going to hell! I should only have sacrificed my life, I should only have lost this frail tabernacle;

but you, (if you flee not to this refuge which is set before you,) will lose your soul !”

And now let me probe you. Have you felt yourselves filled with that sorrow which worketh a repentance not to be repented of? Or have you sat down in a state of insensibility, awful in the extreme? Trifling with sin, is trifling with the devil. A lion or a tiger is a safer playfellow than sin, a great deal. Choose any thing to amuse you, rather than this monster.

Your safety lies in flight ; and the whole of our life may be considered as a flight: for we cannot be said to be safe, and secure in every sense, until we arrive in the refuge above !

3. A hope of preserving his life. This would encourage him exceedingly. We may well suppose that the homicide may, in some cases, have been running, hard pressed by the avenger of blood, who was closely following him. How, in this case would his hope be raised, and his heart be cheered, when he came within sight of one of the cities of refuge ! He would say to himself, ‘ I have hitherto beaten the avenger ; I have been swifter than he ; only let me enter there, and I am safe !’

This may represent to us the hope of success which we have, in approaching God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Cherish this hope, whatever sin you may be guilty of. Cherish this hope—here there is a certainty—you have not



only a promise but an oath—the promise and the oath of God. And the apostle seems to allude either to the cities of refuge, or to the altar which was a refuge, when he says, “That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.” (Heb. vi. 18.) The strong consolation was founded on the oath and on the promise of God. Both are in favour of those who seek a refuge in him; although at present they may not be able to realize the blessing as their own.

Every thing in Scripture is eminently encouraging; every thing promises success. To whom? To him who perseveres; and the welcome he receives is this, “Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom.” (Job xxxiii. 24.) “You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.” (Eph. ii. 1.) “Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.” (Col. ii. 14, 15.) In the ceremonial law, (and this is here to be connected with the sins of the Jew and Gentile,) those who were engaged in its services were perpetually reminded that the great sacrifice for sin had not as yet been pre-

sented to the Father. But when the Saviour died to atone for sin, he blotted out these remembrances, this hand-writing that was against us, and nailed it to his cross; a spectacle to the universe; as a receipt, shewing that the debt had been cancelled by his God and Father, and by our God and Father.

We have, besides, the testimony of God himself, when his voice descended from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased;" (Matt. iii. 17;) evidently teaching us this likewise, that he is well pleased with all those who seek and find an eternal refuge in him.

#### V. THE HOMICIDE'S SECURITY AND PROVISION IN THE CITY OF REFUGE.

There he found sustenance, every thing he needed. He fled to the city of refuge from the avenger, not only as a guilty, but as a poor person. He took nothing with him; and indeed it could not be otherwise; for had he taken any thing with him, it must have impeded his flight. Carry nothing with you, if you seek Christ: all that you need in life, in death, and for eternity, is to be found in him; all temporal, and all spiritual blessings.

It is worthy of observation, that there were no instruments of death in the city of refuge; they were excluded by the express command of God. No one, had he been so disposed, could have found

an instrument, with which to put another to death.

Now all these things are eminently typical of the security of the believer in Jesus Christ. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Rom. viii. 1.) "By him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." (Acts xiii. 39.) "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed." (John vi. 35, 54, 55.) "He shall dwell on high; his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure." (Isa. xxxiii. 16.) All that man can possibly want is to be found in the Saviour; and let it be mentioned likewise, with triumph and gratitude, all that God could possibly provide.

The manslayer in the city of refuge was not supported by his own industry, but at the public expense, by the express command of God. In all these things we find striking types of Christ, and of the blessings of his salvation. And now let me ask, Have you and I, have we all fled for refuge to the hope set before us in the Gospel?

Perhaps there may be some sinners here, who are living, securely and thoughtlessly, on the brink of eternal destruction : perhaps the arm of God may be even now lifted up to strike them down to hell ! Consider the awful state in which you are ; dream not, as thousands now in hell once did, that there is any possibility of salvation but in Jesus Christ. It militates against all the divine perfections to save a soul but in him ; it militates against all the divine perfections to save a soul otherwise than by repentance towards God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Indeed, these blessings are salvation in an incipient state, developing themselves here below.

If asked to define these blessings in a very few words, I should call them the attributes of the new man, the attributes of the image of God within the human soul.

O flee from the wrath to come ! And is it not high time ? Would you not think that individual mad, who would, unnecessarily, expose his life to the shaft of a murderer every moment ? And now let me ask you, are not you a much greater madman, exposing yourself, all your life-time, to the shafts of sin and Satan, and to the displeasure of God ? O flee, then, from the wrath to come !

In addressing believers, I would observe, that the life of faith very much resembles the life of the homicide in the city of refuge. He lived at the expense of another, and so must we. The

life of the believer is, from first to last, a life of faith in God, and of dependence on him for every thing.

The man-slayer might approach the walls of the city of refuge, and condemn all the vengeance of the avenger of blood. Thus the believer, when safe in Jesus Christ, may review the violated law of God, and call to mind all the sins he has ever committed with all their aggravations; Satan may give him his whole history complete, and yet he may smile and say, ‘I am safe, eternally safe from you all.’

Can you tell me of any thing necessary for the sinner that is not to be found in the Saviour? You complain of deadness and stupidity—these are the attributes of sin, and the Saviour is a refuge. Do not wait! principle may be strong and vigorous when the affections are dead: triumph over your feelings. Indeed, it is absolutely necessary to set our enemies at defiance, and to prize the salvation of God in Christ Jesus.

To conclude. See the superiority of *our* refuge. The cities of refuge were a refuge only for the body; a man might have travelled from them to hell. But ours is a refuge for the soul, an eternal refuge! The body may, and must, descend into the grave, and thus return to the dust, its native element; but the soul will ascend, and rest for ever in the bosom of his Father and his God.

The homicide left all his property behind ; but we find all our treasures in Jesus Christ ; and, thrice happy those who have given up the idea of finding treasures in any other. Husbands and wives, parents and children, friends and relatives, seek not in each other what is to be found only in God ; live each day as if each day were your last, conscious that you are eventually to meet before the throne of God.

Once more. When the high priest died, the homicide left the city of refuge ; but our great High Priest has died and liveth for ever, and we enter the city of refuge to remain in it eternally. Do you ask me what its walls are ? The perfections of God ! Before any enemies can assail those who trust in God, they must triumph over God himself.

Lastly. After all, the homicide was a prisoner. He was not so happy in the city of refuge, as if he had been in the bosom of his family. The heart of the man-slayer must have frequently heaved a sigh : ‘ When shall I return to my home, to those who are near and dear to me ? ’ But the believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is with his family ; in the midst of those with whom he is destined to spend a blissful eternity. He has his best friends with him—his nearest, dearest relatives. And, my brethren, live daily in the habit of prizing your relationship to each other in Jesus Christ, above every other ; more than the



relationship of husband and wife, parent and child, brother and sister.

Be nobly ambitious of serving God as your Father, as much as you can. Weak as you are, do not faint ; remember the arm of the Lord is strong, yea, it is strength. Remember this too ; though naturally so sinful that we are capable of rivalling and even of exceeding the devil in iniquity ; yet under the influence of the Divine Spirit, we are capable of rivalling angels in obedience. Angels know nothing of the obedience of martyrs. God has been glorified by his people on earth, more than by angels in heaven. Angels know not what it is to forgive injuries. “Covet earnestly the best gifts.” Do not insult God by asking for a little—ask not for one thing, but for all things, for every thing he has to bestow ; for all he has to confer on a finite being. Your prayers will be answered, and you will be blessed for ever and ever. Amen.

## SERMON XXV.

## THE PENITENT THIEF.

LUKE xxiii. 42, 43.

*And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.*

It has been observed, that love is exceedingly ingenious, and invincibly persevering, in seeking the gratification of its object; and with equal truth it may be said, that hatred maintains the same inflexible determination, in pursuing and distressing its object. This twofold truth appears fully presented to us in the history of Jesus of Nazareth. Sin never found an object capable of receiving all its malignity, till Jesus appeared on earth; and man never found an object on which he could glut himself with transgression, till incarnate Deity appeared. Then we find concentrated the aggre-

gate hatred of men and devils, Jews and Gentiles, earth and hell. On the other hand, it is equally true, that God never found an object toward which he showed the whole of his love, till he found man sunk in the deepest degradation, polluted in body and soul. Both present themselves to us in the history of Jesus. Behold him invested with the scarlet robe, the robe of royalty, or rather of insulted royalty. See him crowned with thorns, and a reed, the emblem of mock majesty, put into his hand. A common criminal would not have been thus treated, but it was his holiness that worked up their sin to its highest pitch of malignity. We find, generally speaking, that individuals, however infamous and involved in crime, are pitied when the arm of justice arrests, condemns, and leads them to execution. Again; he was crucified not only with, but between, two thieves: the most infamous place given him. He was also most shamefully treated when suspended upon the cross: they gave to him vinegar and gall to drink, and with cruel mockings pursued him with unrelenting fury to the last. Here we behold one side of the question; now reverse the picture, and who are the persons thus engaged? Many of them subjects of his everlasting love. They pursued Messiah as far as they possibly could; thus proving, in the clearest manner, what I have often insisted upon, that man, in point of guilt,

is a suicide, a homicide, and a deicide. But "God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. v. 8.) And his love is here eminently set forth in rescuing a thief from eternal destruction. He petitions the Saviour, and says, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom;" and the gracious reply is, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." I would now solicit your attention to four particulars.

I. THE MEANS BY WHICH THE THIEF WAS CONVERTED.—It has been supposed by many that his transgression was a solitary one; that he was detected in an act of theft, and executed for it. But where is the proof? This evidently flows from the corrupt heart of man. He is to be made a little thief, because a great thief cannot be saved: and thus the Redeemer's glory is obscured, and sinners are banished from him. The probability is, that these two thieves belonged to some of the gangs which infested Judea at that time, and that the crimes for which they suffered were robbery and murder. I proceed to observe, that this thief was a Jew, and one who appeared to be well acquainted with the prevailing opinion of the Hebrews.

"Remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." He was a believer in revelation. Notice what the Saviour says: "To-day shalt

thou be with me in paradise.” It is very clear that he understood what the Saviour alluded to. The paradise in which our first parents fell, was a striking type of the paradise above. I think there can be no doubt that he perfectly understood the Saviour’s meaning; for we can hardly suppose that Jesus would have addressed him in language unintelligible to him. Bear this in mind, and it will lead us to the means of his conversion. What he knew before we cannot tell; but he appears to have disgraced it, whatever it was. “Where there is no vision, the people perish.” In this instance there was a twofold vision—the vision of revelation, and the vision of the immediate influence of the Holy Spirit. Both of these were possessed by the thief, when he addressed the Saviour, and received such a gracious answer. Who was the preacher the thief heard? Messiah himself! “My God, my God! why hast thou forsaken me?” “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!” These were the sermons blessed to his conversion; his eyes were opened; and instead of sinking into the abyss of destruction, he immediately began to ascend towards heaven, and beheld his glory, “the glory of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”

II. The second thing to be considered is, THE REALITY OF HIS CONVERSION.

The first proof of it is his penitence. And if we consider that penitence must involve in it a knowledge of the evil of sin, a consciousness of its desert, with confession of it to God, and to man likewise where necessary, we have it fully exemplified in the instance before us. When Nathan came to David, and said, "Thou art the man!" his reply was, "I have sinned against the Lord." Here is immediate confession. The individual who is conscious of the evil of sin, and the mercy of God, cannot but confess sin, and seek for mercy.

The second proof of the reality of his conversion was his zeal. His fellow-thief had blasphemed his Lord and Master; but he, immediately, instead of soliciting any thing for himself, pleaded the cause of his Saviour. This is one proof of true penitence; and let us bring the test home to ourselves individually. Can we bear to hear the name of God blasphemed? Can we endure to see his holy law trampled under foot? He pleaded his Master's cause in these words: "Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? and we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds, but this man hath done nothing amiss."

The third proof of the genuineness of his conversion, was his fraternal love. His fellow-sufferer was sinking into hell, and he preached the gospel to him in the most interesting manner.



Here is a rich proof of his conversion ; and observe how the gospel necessarily involves the law of God. The law originally comprised love to God and man. And this is the essence of the law. If you ascend to heaven, it is so there ; it was so in Eden, and ever will be in the hearts of all who are created anew. For the Saviour satisfied the law as a covenant, that he might bring us into conformity to it as a rule.

III. Consider, thirdly, HIS REQUEST: "LORD, REMEMBER ME!" The first object that arrested his attention was the Saviour ; the second, as I have just observed, was his fellow-sufferer ; and, the last, himself. Here is true religion. I remember nothing in scripture comparable with it. After admonishing his blaspheming companion, he most humbly threw himself at the feet of his Master, saying only, "Remember me !" In this request we find exceedingly strong faith, and a clear proof that he knew Messiah. Much has been said against justification by faith alone, and it was very much the fashion formerly to attack the doctrine. There is, however, an easy method of repelling the charge. Faith in Jesus Christ is an act of worship. Those who deny the doctrine, do not worship Jesus ; and as there is no approaching God the Father but through his Son, I do not hesitate to say, that those who deny justification by faith are not Christians. But this

thief evinced his faith by casting his all upon him. And where was the Saviour at that moment? In the depths of a hell so eminently due to you and myself. We do not wonder that Stephen when he beheld the Saviour, adored him, and cast himself on him, for he was then in glory, at the right-hand of his Father. We are not surprised at Paul, returning from the third heaven to earth, telling us that he saw and heard things impossible for him to utter. Stephen and Paul beheld the glory of Messiah in the light of his celestial paradise. They saw him in his exaltation. But the thief perused his glory with equal accuracy in humiliation and suffering. His eyes penetrated the depths of infamy and disgrace in which the outcast of heaven and earth was plunged, when his own disciples had forsaken him and fled. The Jews, both priests and people, conspired against him, and rejected him; while the dying thief knew and recognized him, and cast himself entirely on his mercy.

The next thing to be noticed is his spirituality. "Remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." What a striking contrast between this short, fervent, sublime, and spiritual prayer, and the language of his companion; "If thou be Christ, save thyself and us." Though sinking fast into the arms of death, he only thought of earth and of returning to it; anxious alone to be delivered from temporal death; while the

other, rising above every earthly consideration, fixed his eye steadily upon that Paradise, that spiritual kingdom, to which his petition referred.

IV. In the last place, observe THE SAVIOUR'S ANSWER. "And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." He answers him immediately, and what does he promise? Himself in all his glory—a kingdom to a thief, whose petition was only, "Remember me." Ye devils, ascend from hell; produce the chronicles of darkness, that we may read the dismay that pervaded your legions, when the illustrious traveller penetrated the territory of the prince of the power of the air, wrested the prey from the fangs of the destroyer, and lifted the expiring thief from earth to heaven! Ye angels of light, descend from your celestial abodes; unroll the records of heaven, that we may peruse your ecstatic delight and triumph, when the same travellers passed the crystal portals of the heavenly city, their progress unarrested by any impediment, till both were before the throne of God in glory.

Learn from this subject a few interesting lessons. By taking the dying thief, or rather by taking him, who once had been a thief, to heaven, the Saviour proved, in the clearest manner, his triumph over sin, Satan, death, and hell; and clearly evinced that he had fathomed the depths

of our torment, and fully borne the desert of our iniquity. It has been said that the Son of God laid aside his glory while on earth. By no means; none but the thoughtless could assert it. On the contrary, he came to display it in a new and more glorious manner. Ask the angels above, ask the dying thief, and will they not echo this sentiment, that he developed his glory as a Saviour in the completest manner?

Again, we learn to correct some popular mistakes. And, first, that the Saviour descended into hell from the cross. But all the hell he suffered was upon the cross, and from the cross he took the expiring thief to heaven. We learn, too, that there is no such thing as purgatory. It is a popish lie—would to God it were the only one! We learn that there is no such intermediate state—that the soul, when quitting the body, immediately ascends to heaven.

Another lesson taught us is, that we should avoid presumption. Though one thief was raised from the depths of hell to the height of glory, yet Justice, avenging the cause of her God, sank another in the abyss of eternal woe. There is something in this eminently calculated to rivet our attention. We are also taught, on the other hand, to shun despair. Truth banishes despair and presumption at the same moment. We see it possible, that the vilest sinner on this side eternal destruction may be forgiven, changed, and

invested with the righteousness and image of Jesus, and escape from sin and all its consequences.

The triumph of the dying thief, and of his Lord and Master, seems to be the greatest of all wonders. If we read the consequences here below, we find rocks breaking their hard hearts—convulsions rending the earth, and shaking death into life. If we lift our eyes heavenwards, we behold the sun putting on the robe of mourning for his murdered Lord. Heathens beheld it, and cried out, “Either nature is in the jaws of destruction, or the God of nature suffers.” These phenomena were astonishing, and no doubt calculated to arrest the attention of the thoughtless; but they all sink into insignificance when contrasted with the mighty transformation effected by the divine energy of the Holy Spirit on the mind of this poor criminal. The tree that had been bearing the fruit of sin for years, was fast ripening for eternal fire: the axe of death was cutting it down, and it was inclining fearfully over the precipice of hell: in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, it was changed; it struck its root deep into the centre of the rock of ages, lifted its head in eternal triumph before the throne of God, and bears fruit so rich that the hand of God is engaged, and will ever be engaged, in collecting it, as an eternal feast for his own glory.

Lastly, let us remember that we must all be

saved precisely as this poor thief. There is only one mode of salvation. How is an infant saved? In the same manner as the thief. How was Stephen the martyr saved? Exactly in the same way: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" We find none of the most eminent saints presuming to trust themselves for a moment in the hands of absolute Deity. They all trust in Jesus; young and old, saints of every description. Saints, notwithstanding all their high attainments, unite in this, in beholding Jesus, and casting their all upon him; and in so doing, they set at defiance every enemy. May God enable us to follow their example, and the same glorious results must ensue.



## SERMON XXVI.

IT IS FINISHED.

THE SUBSTANCE OF A SERMON ON

JOHN XIX. 30.

*It is finished.*

THESE are the last words that came from the lips of the dear Redeemer—and he bowed his head and gave up the ghost. Richer words could not flow from his lips, or words more calculated to administer peace to a conscience smitten with a sense of the wrath of God. The will of the Father, Son, and Spirit, respecting the work of Jesus in his humiliation, was finished: the types which prefigured the work of the Messiah had found in him their most glorious accomplishment; all that the prophets spoke of him and his work was fulfilled; every enemy was triumphed over; all righteousness completed; therefore he cried, “It is finished.”

The words imply, that the Saviour had a work in the covenant of grace given him to perform—that it was a great and glorious work—that he was alone in it—and he completed it in the most glorious manner. It was the greatest and the most glorious work of God ; and God himself could not have given it a more finishing stroke. May we be so led to him, that we may feel our need of his sacrifice. If not, we have not the religion of the saints of old, who are now before the throne. This brings us to the test. What know we of a sacrifice ? Does the religion of the Pharisee comprise it ? No : and therefore, however plausible his conduct may be, he shall most assuredly be dismissed to the lowest hell.

The Saviour undertook the work, and was anointed by the Holy Spirit to accomplish the work he had undertaken. Every thing was, and is carried on by virtue of a covenant ; without it none can be saved. Hear what the Saviour says : “ My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work ; ” the work which was given him by the Father. This establishes the covenant, and the offices of each in it. Again he says, “ I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.” On the cross he teaches that the eternal work—every thing necessary to satisfy God’s justice—was completed : the price fully paid ; and a perfect, everlasting righteousness brought in. The creation and preservation

of universal being is a great work ; but infinitely less glorious than this, and little in comparison with it. There is in this work all the perfection of created and uncreated existence : all the perfections of Deity shining in full lustre ; all the graces of humanity shining in full lustre also : we see the attributes of Deity flowing from heaven to earth through the channel of man—one who was in all things like ourselves, sin only excepted. There was this peculiarity in the Saviour—he preserved the soul alive in the midst of death ; the preservation of a soul alive to God, under the wrath of God, is seen here alone.

The work of the Saviour comprises all that can satisfy the most poor, and needy, and abject creatures, and all that can satisfy God. All that is necessary for poor sinners like ourselves, and all that is necessary for God himself : for heaven above, and earth below. May we be led by the Holy Spirit to set a due value on it ! And how may we know when we do so ? When we value it above every thing that heaven and earth contain, then we are right, and value it aright. How terrible in holiness and justice that God who could be satisfied with nothing less ! how infinite his love to poor sinners, that spared not his own Son, but gave him up for us all !

In the sacrifice of Calvary the powers of heaven and hell were marshalled against each other. Heaven demanded the ransom—hell put forth all

its powers to prevent it ; but heaven prevailed ; therefore the Saviour cried, " It is finished." It was a glorious work. To prove its greatness, consider the dignity of the person ; no one else could have endured the billows of the wrath of God. His deity, and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, kept him from sinking beneath the weight.

Again. He was alone in it ; and it was necessary that he should be. The work was infinite : the person was infinite. Had all created existence died with him, no value could have been added to the sacrifice. When we speak of an atonement and righteousness, remember that both were accomplished on the cross, and accomplished in the most glorious manner ; for they were the work of an infinite person, and consequently they are of infinite value. See him, then, alone in it. There was sorrow from every source—there was the malice of human beings — there was more ; there was all the rage and malice of the powers of darkness ;—yet was there more, infinitely more ; he was exposed to all his Father's wrath ; he stood precisely where we must have stood throughout eternity, exposed to all to which we were liable. Could a ray of comfort have flowed into his bosom before he paid the infinite debt we had contracted, the work would have been marred. Sorrow, pain, and anguish, were his portion ; for he stood as our representative. No one but

himself could have entered the ocean of his Father's wrath. "Whither I go," he said to Peter, (who had a high opinion of himself then, but was taught to know himself better afterwards,) "thou canst not follow me now:" he was to go alone. The law required, in its command, and in its curse, at his hands, obedience, and punishment for the violation. It does not require from an angel what is due from man. As man's surety, the Saviour must have been alone, and destitute of comfort. But who is he? One whose feet tread the bottom of hell, while his head towers over all: who feasts angels above, while he receives hell into his bosom. God cannot do without these truths, in saving a soul; and we cannot do without them, if we mean to be saved.

The work was completed in the most glorious manner. The Saviour fixed his eyes on every friend, and every foe; on the engagements of eternity; on what types had prefigured, and prophets foretold; on the command, in all its comprehensiveness and all its minutiae; on the curse, in all its terror: and proclaimed, "It is finished!" Viewing his church in all the sins, committed, and to be committed—that robe made perfect, which is to hide her shame for ever—he saw that work complete which shut the gates of hell, and opened the gates of heaven, and cried, "It is finished!" Had not all this been true; had not the Saviour obeyed every command; and had

not his inmost soul received and annihilated every curse ; had he not paid every tittle of the mighty debt, and fully satisfied his Father's justice, he could not have said it. He challenged universal being to scrutinize his work, when he cried, " It is finished !" His words filled heaven with joy, and hell with dismay.

The important inquiry is, Do we know the value of it ? How do our bosoms echo it ? There is a sweet echo to these words in the bosom of every child of God. The religion of Jesus is for sinners, and sinners such as we are. It comprises a sacrifice that atones, and a righteousness that justifies. There is, in the bosom of one who knows God, in his law and in his gospel, a perpetual restlessness, till he finds peace and security in that righteousness which justifies from all things. Encourage the ambition of knowing Christ, and of knowing your interest in him ; for if led to desire it, we shall be put in possession of it. We may know it, as Job and Paul did ; but if we are to know it, we must be taught it as they were ; we must embrace the truth as they did ; we must have the same view of the perfections of God ; the same reliance on the work of the Saviour. " It is finished !" says the Saviour. ' It is finished ! ' echoes the bosom of the child ; ' and God must cease to be God ere I can be rejected.'

I am ashamed to think how little I know of



this sacrifice ; but this is no reason for not persevering. Though beaten back five hundred, or fifty thousand times, press forward. No enemy can successfully oppose : persevere ! — “ Then shall ye know, if ye follow on to know the Lord.”

Those who are taught the value of the work, have a sweet assurance that it cannot be undone ; for who can set a just law and a risen Saviour at variance ? The serpent’s head is crushed ; and all the physicians of earth and hell cannot cure it. He hath blotted out the hand-writing that was against us, and nailed it to the cross, as a receipt in full of all demands ; that every poor sinner who approaches, may see himself discharged for ever. Thither flee.

## SERMON XXVII.

## THE FRIENDSHIP AND HOSPITALITY OF GOD.

THE SUBSTANCE OF A SERMON ON

ISAIAH xxv. 6.

*In this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.*

WE have here a rich metaphorical description of the blessings of the gospel. God must in some sense be the food of every moral agent : if so in respect to innocent beings, how much more must he be so to those who once were guilty !

“This mountain,” that is, his church—Zion, an eminent type of the church of God. (Read Isa. ii. 2, 3.) It is in his church that God makes a feast, the feast of feasts, the most glorious feast that he has ever prepared : and thus the text leads us to consider the friendship and hospitality of God.

## I. THE FRIENDSHIP OF GOD.

Men invite their friends to a feast. There may be peace among men without friendship ; but there can be no true friendship without peace : with God there can be no peace without friendship : he asks not *half a heart* ; he asks, what it is alone worthy of himself to receive, the *whole* ; and he will enable his people to give themselves to him eventually, without one wandering thought for ever. But more than this : he does not give himself by halves to his church. The intimacy subsisting between God and his church is greater than any other which can be formed : a truth calculated to arrest the most abandoned, and which has arrested some such, who are now in the bosom of God. Do not be shocked at the idea of friendship and familiarity with God ; we must be in the enjoyment of both for ever, or be eternally miserable. Familiarity with God creates reverence ; those who are not familiar with him treat him with contempt : “ God is not in all their thoughts ;” these are they who are at a distance from him, and treat him with disdain : “ acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace.” I might speak of the friendship of God with his holy angels ; but the friendship of a believer with his God is far more intimate. We have many strong instances of friendship among men ; but the friendship of a believer and his God is far stronger than his friendship with any fellow-creature. The

proof of this is to be found in the fact, that you would be unwilling to open your heart to any created being, and tell all that passes there. But here is the bosom of one (the believer says) full of so much love that I am welcome to him: I confess all my sins, all my guilt, and all my misery: I can cast *all* my care upon him. This is friendship indeed. Remember then, that in proportion as we are at a distance from God, we treat him with disrespect. God, in infinite love, will always take care to keep his church mindful of her nothingness, and his own glory: in this is her heaven.

It is the glory of the gospel that it makes overtures of peace to the most rebellious: take the words of God: "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool;" (Isa. i. 18;) and again, comparing the blessings of the gospel to a feast, as in the text: "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness." (Isa. lv. 2.) Thus God expostulates with those who are in the pursuit of other objects. Again: the Saviour takes up the same metaphor: "Tell them I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things

are ready ; come unto the marriage." (Matt. xxii. 4.)

But it will be asked, How is this friendship contracted? I answer, By faith : " Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. v. 1, &c.) By faith the believer enters into the palace of the King of kings, and sits down at the royal table, at the head of which is the King himself. Being at peace with God, all earth and hell combined cannot make me miserable. If possessed of the friendship of God, I may smile on universal being. David was much exercised ; hear him : " Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies ; thou anointest my head with oil, my cup runneth over." (Ps. xxiii. 5.) It is not necessary for God to remove his church from earth to make her happy ; or to take her to a distance from her enemies ; he will do it in the presence of all her enemies. The children of Israel reasoned at Marah, as we should have reasoned had we been there ; but the Lord was not limited : it was not necessary to remove either them or the waters. A tree was cut down, and the waters were sweetened : and one drop of the love of God will sweeten the bitterest cup. Tell me, ye afflicted ones, have you ever wanted any thing but God—more and more of his presence in your souls? The more we lose, if we have God, the richer we grow ; for he only takes away

other things to make more room for himself, and give himself a new welcome. What think we of this ?

## II. THE HOSPITALITY OF GOD.

Surely from such friendship, rich hospitality may be expected. We judge of the hospitality of any one by these three things, by the provision he makes for the entertainment of his guests—the reception he gives them—and the period during which he is pleased with their society, and is seen delighting to serve them.

1. Provision. This depends on two things—disposition and ability. Among men some may want one, and some the other ; but what think we of the will and the affluence of Deity—of every perfection of God in Christ Jesus, to protect, preserve, bless, and felicitate the church for ever ? All the perfections of God shine in the covenant of grace ; his holiness, his justice, his mercy, his faithfulness. God in all his glory—in the glory of all his attributes and perfections—all that constitutes his own happiness, constitutes the happiness of his church. What can I tell you more ? “ Wine on the lees,” preserved in its strength, leading us to that love which knows no beginning, no ending, no change. “ Wine on the lees well refined ;” richer, and of a higher flavour than any other, and clear as the crystal, not only affording nutrition, but gratifying every



sense. The Lord uses these emblems, to point out him in whom mercy and truth meet together ; and the metaphor is used by the Holy Spirit, to give us an idea of the blessings which find their source in the perfections of God, to preserve and support the church.

The Jews, you remember, confessed their sins over the sacrifice, and then received the offering back as their food. We see the necessity of faith in Christ Jesus. It is not only true that sin must be atoned for, the justice of God satisfied, and the records of heaven cancelled ; but the blood which cancels the records of heaven, must cancel all the charges of conscience : this is proved by the sacrifice. We see, then, in whom the feast is found : keep the eye fixed on the atonement of Jesus ; having it fixed there, all will be right ; lose sight of that, and every thing must be wrong.

2. Reception. Some are so kind, you read it in their countenances, the very sight of them is a feast ; but what is the kindness of man to that of God ? Men, at the best, smile on their friends. "This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them : " here is the character of him with whom we are invited to feast. Little thought the Jews that they were proclaiming his glory, and would be the heralds of his fame throughout the world. This is the glory of Jesus, he receiveth sinners.

But what is it that sweetens this feast and

gives to the believer such an exquisite relish for every thing which he receives from the Lord's table? It is this. It is the feast of God himself; all his perfections are unfolded in it: and this endears every thing to him whose heart is touched with the Spirit of God. He knows that it is the chief delight of God, to do good to the unworthy sons and daughters of Adam. Unbelief says, this is not to be credited; but it must be credited. God himself eats at this feast: and the believer drinks at every source of bliss where God delights to drink. "Wine which cheereth God and man." (Judges ix. 13.)—A rich sense must be given to this passage to do justice to it. The Jews offered wine in their sacrifices. The wine typified the blood of Jesus; that blood in which God finds an infinite revenue of glory, and the church everlasting salvation. "They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures." (Psalm xxxvi. 8.)

If we felt these truths as we ought, heaven would begin here. The satisfaction of an individual, rightly taught, flows from this: God is well pleased; his justice is satisfied; I am satisfied likewise; in the provisions of the covenant of peace, I have enough.

3. Duration. You may have been received and welcomed once by man; but after a time, your friend has grown weary of you, and you

have seen a forbidding frown. That frown has never yet been worn on the face of Jehovah. He is never weary of his friends, though men may be ; and if you are distressed in any way by the unkindness of those whom you once thought your friends ; instead of quarrelling with your fellow-creatures, lift up your eyes to the God of heaven and earth ; to one never weary of entertaining a guest with all he has to give. If you ask, What will God do for me ? I answer, All he can do for you : the power, will, and wealth of God, are all engaged for you : yes, for you, poor trembling soul, while you are smiting upon your breast, and saying, “God be merciful to me a sinner !” Reason, trembling believer, as God teaches his apostle to reason : “He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things ?” (Rom. viii. 32.) Is not this enough for you ? How foolish, then, to be content with any thing in this world ?

Again : if it be asked, how long is this feast to last ? I answer—It was begun on earth, but it is not to be concluded on earth ; no, nor for ever. “That ye may eat and drink with me at my table in my kingdom.” “Thou wilt shew me the path of life : in thy presence is fulness of joy ; at thy right-hand there are pleasures for evermore.” (Psalm xvi. 11.)

Now, my dear friends, what think we of all the

perfections of Jehovah, shining in the face of Jesus Christ, as the feast of his people for ever? One may say, Ah! but this feast is prepared for friends; I am an enemy: there is no feast for enemies. It is necessary, indeed, to feel that our character by nature corresponds with the account which God gives of it; but remember, though men prepare feasts for friends only, God took up eternity to prepare and provide a feast for his enemies. "God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." (Rom. v. 8.) But again, another will say, "I have been feeding on ashes."—I am addressing one examining himself; and would to God that we all examined ourselves more; we could lose nothing by it, and we should gain much. While feeding on ashes, you cannot be healthy; but he who knows that he has been feeding on ashes, knows also, that unless he comes to the table of God, he must perish for ever. "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." (John vi. 53.) The Jews were commanded not to eat the blood; for the blood was the life, and there was no life in the sacrifice; but to us it is, "drink the blood:" for here is life—"I am the way, and the truth, and the life;" "I am the resurrection and the life," says the Saviour. (John xiv. 6; and xi. 25.) This is food that keeps alive the living, and gives life to the dead.

What, then, are we engaged in? Something, whether wholesome or destructive, is the food of the soul. Whatever supremely occupies the mind is its food. Are we approaching God in Christ, day after day, receiving out of the fulness that is in Christ? or are we, forgetful of God, seeking happiness in this evil world; or recommending ourselves (attempting, I should rather say, to recommend ourselves) to him by our own righteousness? Remember, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." Some eat professionally only: this avails nothing. Some eat really, but not comfortably; and why? It distresses a host to see his guests not eating; and this is true spiritually. Let each lay his hand on his own bosom, and inquire, Is the righteousness of Jesus my only righteousness? Is his strength my strength? Am I looking up to him for all I want to-day, to-morrow, and for ever? Some, and I trust many, here can say, "In the Lord Jehovah have I righteousness and strength." I find in the covenant all that I want, and infinitely more than I know that I want. All is ready, every thing is prepared; and the disposition in which God delights, is, to take freely and fully. It is said of Mephibosheth that he ate and drank *all his life* at the king's table. Do not trample, then, on your privileges. Again I repeat it, All you want is prepared, and ready at your lips. Open our eyes, O Lord, that we may see this!

And is it not the language of our hearts, how shall we highly honour God? “Eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.” (Cant. v. 1.) Go not empty away. May the Spirit of the living God enable us to feed richly on his bounty now, that we may live on the same bounty for ever!



## SERMON XXVII.

## THE GLORIOUS REST.

THE SUBSTANCE OF A SERMON ON

ISAIAH xi. 10.

*His rest shall be glorious ; (or as in the margin,  
glory.)*

THE Saviour is the rest of his people now and for ever.

The apostle says, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, (ch. iv. 3,) “ We which have believed, do enter into rest ;” that is, the peace of God which is to be found only in Christ Jesus : it is absolutely and infinitely impossible that it should be found any where else.

See the dreadful state of man as a sinner—like Cain, a fugitive and vagabond upon the earth.—His deformity can never be fully seen : ministers, when they endeavour to portray it, are charged with libelling their fellow-creatures ; but it is impossible to libel man : if all that ministers

have ever said of man, from the first who ascended the pulpit, to the present time, were collected together, it would not present a full-length portrait of man as a fallen creature.

Every creature who is a sinner against God is a wanderer from God, whether angel or man. Sin is the same in all—all “seeking rest, and finding none.” In the book of Job, (ch. i. 7 ; ii. 2,) we read, that the Lord asked Satan, Whence comest thou ? and he answered, “from going to and fro”—a restless being, because a sinner : and with this the character of man corresponds precisely ; and but for the refuge provided by God, his state would have been as miserable and desperate throughout eternity as that of Satan himself. In what is man engaged ? In going to and fro, journeying perpetually, sailing to the east and to the west, seeking rest in one creature after another. This is his constant employment ; but he never can seek it successfully, till he finds it in Christ Jesus.

Man, then, is a wanderer from God : but a covenant God has provided a rest in his Son. There are three things to be considered, in regard to this rest :

I. HOW THE SAVIOUR IS THE REST OF HIS PEOPLE.

II. WHY HE IS THEIR REST ; and,

III. HOW HE BECOMES THEIR REST, NOW AND FOR EVER.

1. HOW THE SAVIOUR IS THE REST OF HIS PEOPLE.

He possesses all that man requires, and more cannot be said ; for such are the wants of man as a sinner, that none but God can satisfy them—nothing less than all he is will suffice. In considering him as the rest of his people,

1. The first idea is that of safety.—There can be no rest where there is no security. I appeal to you, if any of you could rest on your beds if you feared the presence of thieves and assassins ? The very idea of rest implies safety.

2. In him is provision for all their wants—this is the next thing : for before man can be at rest, he must have a provision of those things which are necessary for his support.

3. These things, once found in him, are never lost—perpetuity and eternity of enjoyment are theirs.

1. The Saviour delivers and protects from every foe ; first, from sin, and consequently from every other. If we experience deliverance from the guilt, the power, and the love of sin, we shall know no enemy : we shall soon look back from the shores of eternity, and, like the Israelites of old, see all enemies for ever slain. Captivity to sin includes captivity to all enemies ; and deliverance from the captivity of sin, includes all other deliverance.

The Saviour delivers from the guilt, the power,

and the love of sin, by his own blood. Hear what is said of such as are delivered ; and mark —there can be no deliverance from one, if not from all : great and glorious as he is, Jehovah himself cannot deliver from one, unless he delivers from all : no individual can be delivered from the guilt of sin, unless the power of it be destroyed ; and the power of sin cannot be destroyed in the bosom, if the individual be not delivered from the guilt of it.—Of such, hear what he says, but first, observe their character. “He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly ; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions ; that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes ; that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood ; and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil.” (Isa. xxxiii. 15.) Never witness the commission of evil, if you can avoid it. No one but God can witness evil, without being contaminated, unless preserved from it by God himself. If you hear blasphemy in the streets, stop your ears, or get away from it : preserve this delicacy, it is the gift of God ; that shutteth his eyes from seeing evil. I wish to find more of this delicacy in the people of God ; living as we do in this metropolis, surrounded with evil of every kind, assailed with it perpetually, we have no security from contamination, but in fleeing from it. Now what is the blessing of one so delivered, whose character and conduct are here portrayed — “He

shall dwell on high, his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks." (ver. 16.) He shall dwell, where? Not in a fortress; not in a place fortified by art, however strong such places may sometimes be: he shall dwell in the munitions of rocks; he shall be safe in God himself; where no shaft of Satan shall ever reach. Every attribute in Deity shall rise around him for protection. The inhabitant (as in ver. 24) shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein, shall be forgiven their iniquity. He who finds this rest in Jesus, is safe; and were it possible for hell to send forth all its hosts, they would be scattered like chaff. "Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence, from the pride of man; thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues." (Ps. xxxi. 20.) May we find rest in Jesus from a guilty conscience. Again I say, deliverance from sin is deliverance from every foe. The apostle expresses the security of those who are found in Jesus in a striking manner. "Your life is hid with Christ in God." (Col. iii. 3.) If it be possible for any enemy to deprive us of our life, that enemy must be stronger than God.

2. As Jesus is the life, so he is the food of the soul. The apostle says, "My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." (Phil. iv. 19.) He adopts as it were two standards. He fathoms our wants, and

then his own riches for us. What an enemy must unbelief be, to oppose and reject all this ! Again, “ They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house, and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures.” (Ps. xxxvi. 8.) He leads his people to the fountain whence all his glory flows; they shall be satisfied, where God himself is satisfied.

3. We find the perpetuity and eternity of these blessings. The Saviour says, “ I am the door, by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find pasture.” (John x. 9.) He shall find every blessing: and again, the Holy Spirit says, “ The Lord is a sun and a shield, the Lord will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.” (Ps. lxxxiv. 11.) And again, “ He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all; how shall he not with him also freely give us all things ?” (Rom. viii. 32.) This truth is not taught us once or twice, but many times, in consequence of the strength of our unbelief. This is enough to prove, that here he will give what is necessary for his people; and in Rev. vii. we read what the Lamb will do for them in eternity. “ They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat; for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of wa-



ters ; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

## II. WHY CHRIST IS THE REST OF HIS PEOPLE.

The reason is clear : God himself finds rest in him ; this truth is necessary to silence a guilty conscience, I mean a conscience enlightened to see the guilt of sin, its evil and desert. God finds a glorious rest for all his perfections in the work of Jesus ; and if he as a sin-avenging God finds rest, why may not I ? Surely I ought. God rested from his work, when this once fair creation was completed. This is only a part of his works ; and all his other works are only partial emanations of his glory ; as the light that visits this earth, and illumines all the other planets that revolve around the sun, is but an emanation from the fountain of light. But in the covenant of redemption we see all : in Jesus Christ we see God himself in all his glory ; that glory which the church reflects. " Out of Zion the perfection of beauty, God hath shined." (Ps. l. 2.) She is the perfection of beauty : why ? because God hath poured forth all his glory on her. David purposed building a house for the Lord ; but he determined that Solomon should build the house, teaching us that he is a God of peace in his Son, of whom Solomon was a type : David was prevented by the Lord, because he had been a man of war. The ark and the temple were both types

of Christ : we find David saying, “ Return unto thy rest, O my soul,” (Ps. cxvi. 7,) where ? to the ark of the covenant ; typifying him who is the real ark and mercy seat ; and why does David say, Return there ; because God has invited, commanded, nay more, so won my heart to himself, that I must enter into it. The religion of Jesus is admirably adapted to us sinners.

Again. “ The Lord hath chosen Zion, he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest for ever ; here will I dwell, for I have desired it.” (Ps. cxxxii. 13, 14.) The reason is evident, the Son covers it with his glory. If then I am taught to prize Jesus, my taste is formed on that of God, and I fix my rest where Jehovah Elohim has fixed his for ever.

Once more, to shew the correspondence between the desire of David and of God, they determined to dwell in the same place. “ One thing,” said David, “ have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.” (Ps. xxvii. 4.) “ This is my rest for ever, here will I dwell, saith the Lord.” These things were penned by the Holy Spirit, for the encouragement of the church to the end of time.

### III. HOW CHRIST BECOMES THE REST OF HIS PEOPLE.

Simply by believing : the weak resting on the

strong. Some quarrel with salvation by faith ; but when rightly considered, it will be found impossible that men should be saved in any other way. " Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore ? Because they sought it not by faith." (Rom. ix. 31, 32.) And again, " They could not enter in because of unbelief." (Heb. iii. 19.) We must be taught by the Holy Spirit to rely on Jesus. Faith fixes its eye on the glory of Christ, as a deliverer from all unworthiness : it is the excellency of faith to ascribe all sin to man, and all the glory of deliverance from it to God. It disposes man to trust the Saviour in the face of all enemies. " To them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in his name." (John i. 12.) The believer receiving the testimony of God, receives Jesus ; and by faith enters into, and lives in, the enjoyment of rest here. This was the experience of all who are gone before. Read the 11th chapter of the Hebrews. It was by faith that all the mighty works were done, which are there recorded. By faith Noah built the ark, and entered in, and observe, God shut him in ; so, in the spiritual ark, God preserves his people. What must have been the feelings of Noah, knowing himself safe in the protection of God, while thousands perished around him ? This was nothing compared to the spiritual deliverance of

which it was but a type. We live in a land of enemies ; but the time is coming when a deluge of vengeance will descend. Who will be safe then ? None but those who are found in the spiritual ark—in the Lord Jesus Christ.

There are many striking things in scripture, emblems of the Saviour :—the cities of refuge, appointed by God, where the manslayer found safety and a supply of all his wants. And again, when the destroying angel passed through the land of Egypt, none were safe but those who were found under the protection of the blood of the passover : so, hereafter, none will be safe, but those who are protected by the blood of the atonement.

A solemn question follows : Am I yet in the first Adam, where nothing but destruction is to be found ; or is that union dissolved, and another formed, whereby I am united eternally to Christ the Lord ?—an awful inquiry : but the believer rejoices in seeing that God is more glorified in his salvation than he would have been in his destruction. Let this silence our little murmurings. Wait in patience and sweet resignation to his will, and the rest which is begun here, will soon be completed in glory. It is viewed as *one* by God now ; and though we cannot now see it as God sees it, it will very soon be no longer an object of faith, but be sensibly enjoyed for ever.



A TREATISE,

CONTAINING

THE SUBSTANCE OF SEVERAL SERMONS

ON

THE LORD'S SUPPER.





A TREATISE  
ON THE LORD'S SUPPER.

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1 COR. xi. 25.

*This do in remembrance of me.*

WE are here, in an eminent degree, the creatures of time and sense. When man departed from God, he separated himself from his spiritual parent, and became conversant only with matter. Raised from the ruins of the fall, his destiny is far higher and more glorious than if he had never transgressed : he is destined to lose every earthly alloy, every terrestrial adhesion, and to live eternally in the friendship of God himself.

The Jews were burthened with many ceremonies indicative of the important truth, that sin was not atoned for. The Christian rites are very

simple—Baptism, and the Supper of the Lord : the former shewing the absolute necessity of the renovating influence of the Divine Spirit ; the latter teaching us, that united to Christ, we are to live eternally on his fulness ; God being pleased, in his infinite love and condescension, to instruct us, by the use of things with which we are well acquainted, and which are most beneficial to us. Bread and wine are symbolical of the spiritual food, and spiritual medicine, which we find in Christ the Saviour.

The paschal Lamb typified the redemption of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage : the Lord's supper commemorates the redemption of the world by Christ Jesus. The paschal Lamb taught, in type and figure, the first advent of Messiah, and was intended to be sacrificed only until Messiah should come. The Lord's supper has been instituted for the use of his church, until his second advent. " As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come." (1 Cor. xi. 26.)

Let us then consider of what the Lord's supper is commemorative.

1. The love of God in Christ ; the infinite, eternal source of every good, which we, or any other order of beings, ever have possessed, or ever shall possess. All blessings flow to all beings fully and freely, from the unmerited love of God ; but this love appears eminently conspicuous and

full of glory, when shewn to sinful man. It is inconceivably beyond any thing which could enter into the mind of finite being, that he who is God over all, blessed for ever, possessing every source of happiness within himself, should so love humanity, as to raise it from the wreck of the fall, and take it into the most intimate communion with himself.

2. The sufferings and death of Christ. This was the strongest proof that could be given of his love to fallen man; an effect fully commensurate with the cause. We behold all the glories of the divine perfections in the gift of the Son by the Father; and we behold the same glories in the Son giving himself to that death which must have been eternal to us, had it not been for the substitution of Messiah.

3. The sacrifice presented to the Father.—“Christ, our passover, is sacrificed for us.” (1 Cor. v. 7.) He presented himself as a sacrifice—a perfect atonement for sin; hence the believer’s triumph. God is eternally satisfied.

If a child have offended his father, he cannot be happy till he finds peace in his father’s bosom. Fix now the eye of the intellect on the effects of genuine repentance within the human bosom. The believer can never find peace till he is assured that God has been satisfied. With what joy, then, does he perceive that God has been infinitely more glorified by the sacrifice of Christ,

than he ever could be by the obedience even of angels !

Consider, in connexion with this, the blessings which emanate to us from the sacrifice of Christ.

Sin, in its penal consequences, has been annihilated ; so that it can never ruin any of the family of God. Properly speaking, none of the afflictions of the children of God are penal ; they are to be considered as the chastisements of an affectionate father ; the sacrifice of Christ having fully satisfied divine justice. The sacrifices under the Jewish dispensation were types indicative of glorious realities, possessed and enjoyed by the spiritual Jews of old ; for their sins were forgiven them and they were justified ; they were sanctified ; and how ? Messiah's merits travelled back to Eden, as they are now travelling forward to the end of time. The sacrifice of Jesus Christ involves in it the redemption and salvation of fallen man, with every blessing that we can hope to receive at the hands of God, for ever, because it satisfied all the divine perfections. It involves the glories of the divine attributes : which are all engaged in ministering to the weal of man, and will be so engaged throughout eternity.

Let us now direct your attention to the elements—bread and wine ; not in their natural state ; but after having gone through the process best calculated to render them serviceable to the support of the human frame. Corn is

ground, and the grapes are trodden, to typify the sufferings of Christ, and teach us that an absolute God is not the God we worship. We have none of the elements of that religion which can meet an absolute God : we must have a Saviour ; we must have food that has been in the fire of divine vengeance. You remember the injunction, “ Eat not of it raw.”

The idea of an absolute God is hell itself to him who is acquainted with his own heart. He requires a Saviour who has atoned for sin ; one who has passed through the flames of divine vengeance, and trodden the wine-press of the wrath of God : a living Saviour now, and therefore living food.

The elements, then, teach us the absolute necessity of a life of faith. According to the present constitution of things, food is necessary for the support of the body. The Lord could, if he pleased, keep it alive miraculously without food, for any length of time ; but it is not in the power of deity to keep the soul alive, otherwise than in his Son : there is nothing derogatory to the divine perfections in this : it is at variance with all the attributes of God to preserve the soul, but in his Son Jesus Christ : and this the Saviour himself teaches us very emphatically, “ Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.” (John vi. 53, &c.) Every thing else is poison, and not food. Every thing else that



is called religion—that wears the semblance of religion—is replete with destruction to the soul of man.

Food assimilates itself to the human body, blends with it, and eventually becomes a part of it : but here the type is imperfect, as all types are. The spiritual food that we receive assimilates *us* to *itself*—not itself to us. By faith in Jesus Christ we become like him—part of his mystical body.

The elements are strikingly typical of the covenant subsisting between God and man. Our covenant with God, by faith in Christ, involves in it this truth—our absolute dependence on the Saviour for every thing. “ This cup is the new testament in my blood : this do as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.” The receiving of the elements presents to others also a visible symbol of our profession ; and a public profession of Christianity is absolutely necessary. Death, in its most terrific form, is to be met, when the cause of our God requires the sacrifice. “ I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.” It involves in it the life of the soul, and the life of the body is comparatively of little consequence.

It is evident that the Lord’s Supper was instituted by the Saviour, to promote our growth in grace : and though the elements alone will not avail for this, yet the partaking of them in obe-

dience to the command of Christ, has an immediate tendency to remind us of his love—of what he has done, and what he is doing for us at the present moment ; and to strengthen the principle first implanted in the soul by the Divine Spirit ; a principle living, and destined to live for ever, in the energy of God. “ Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.” (2 Tim. ii. 1.) We can look up to the Lord for his blessing only while we are honouring his commands. Though we do not dream of purchasing heaven by our obedience, yet the hand of obedience alone can receive it.

The elements also afford a striking symbol of our communion not only with God, but with each other: and let it be remembered, that we cannot have communion with God and his Christ, without having communion with each other. “ The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the *communion* of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?” (1 Cor. x. 16.) I feel, therefore, no inclination to press the elements on those who are dying: for it appears to me that the Lord's supper was intended for the church of God, when meeting to worship him ; and as a type of that communion which subsists between Christ and his church.

Some will come to the table, little caring whether they understand the nature and design of the ordinance or not : while others are so timid,

that they shrink from approaching it when they ought to come. Doubtless, the Lord will treat timidity with tenderness, because he knows that it is not founded in hypocrisy or deceit : nevertheless, it ought to be publicly insisted upon, that there is, in wilful absence, that which is highly offensive to God. The motives should be severely scrutinized, and brought to the test of divine truth ; to aid in which, I shall now point out a few reasons, why the Lord's family should, without exception, partake of his supper.

First, it is the command of Christ himself, " This do in remembrance of me." The command was originally addressed to his own family, and it is equally imperative at the present day. Dr. Owen, speaking of this command, says, " The authority is as great as ' Thou shalt not commit adultery ; thou shalt not steal ; thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.' " (Exodus xx. 14—16.) He who duly honours the command of Christ would as soon think of conveying away his neighbour's property, as of unnecessarily absenting himself from the Lord's supper.

Many seem to think that it is at their own option whether they will come or not ; but can any have a right, wilfully and purposely, to violate the command of Christ ? Consider two things : the authority of the person speaking—and what he has done for us.

Secondly, the wilful absence of the Lord's family from his table must be highly offensive to him. Let us not imagine that he is beyond sympathy with us—that he has left his feelings behind him here on earth. O no, they are carried to the highest pitch of perfection in glory, and this is the reason why he feels the offence. Be assured that the Saviour is susceptible in heaven of the insults he receives at the hands of his brethren; he must be wholly divested of humanity before he can cease to be so.

Thirdly, gratitude should prompt us to come to the Lord's supper as often as we can. "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me? I will take the cup of Salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord." (Psalm cxvi. 13.)

Fourthly, we should come to the Lord's supper, to arm ourselves with God himself against every calamity. It is in the use of all the means which God has appointed, that he has promised to meet and bless us. The use of the means, in the exercise of faith in Jesus Christ, brings God himself down from heaven to earth to meet us and crown us with himself; and then what have we to fear? Who can make us afraid? Were it possible for earth and hell to set themselves in battle array against us, we should stand unmoved; "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ;

by whom also we have access by faith unto this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also ; knowing that tribulation worketh patience ; and patience, experience ; and experience, hope ; and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us." (Rom. v. 1, &c.) These are precisely the blessings we individually need. How soon any of us may be exercised with what may be exquisitely painful to human feelings, we know not ; our wisdom consists in preparing for the worst calamities that can befall us.

Lastly, our wilful absence from the Lord's table has a direct tendency to bury in oblivion the sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the blessings of his salvation. It was evidently the design of the Lord Jesus Christ, that his truth should arrest the attention of the thoughtless in every possible manner ; it is implied in his words, " This do in remembrance of me ;" commemorate my sufferings, and let an unbelieving world see you ; let them inquire into the reason why you pay so much attention to my commands ; explain it to them, tell them what the bread signifies, what the wine implies ; exhibit to them my glories, not only as God, but also as the risen, triumphant Saviour. Let all know, to the remotest period of time, that the hope of fallen man is suspended wholly on myself.

There are some who, although invited by God himself, yet, under the influence of undisciplined fear, will not approach the Lord's table. "My unworthiness," is their constant excuse. Our unworthiness!—let us view ourselves in the light of God's holy law, even when in our happiest frames and best feelings, and we shall find that we are lamentably defective; we shall find that we need the righteousness of another to justify us, and that righteousness the work of a divine person; for it is an impossibility in the very nature of things, that a finite being should, by his obedience, present God with a righteousness in which another can be saved.

"Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." (Isa. i. 18.) "White as snow"—this is a very rich promise; but, "as wool," is far more so. "They shall be as wool." Wool, died crimson by a skilful hand, can never resume its original colour; no art of man can extract the dye; it imbibes the colour so fully, that it can never be separated from it. Need I tell you how to make a wise and holy use of this interesting promise? We are so deeply imbued with sin; we are so identified with it, that had not God himself undertaken to separate us from it, we should have remained eternally united to it. He interposes



himself, in all his glories, between the soul and its crimson stain; he restores it perfectly to its original hue, and makes it as glorious as those of our first parents when placed in Eden. Yes, and far more so; for our Saviour himself declares, "I am come, that they might have life, and that they might have it *more abundantly*." (John x. 10.) We have then every possible encouragement to approach the Lord, through the mediation of Jesus Christ.

While some, under the influence of fear, shrink from this ordinance, others receive it presumptuously and thoughtlessly. I would, therefore, now point out a few of the marks of presumption.

First, wilful ignorance; the apostle speaks of some who did not discern the Lord's body; they did not study to discern it; they had never given themselves the trouble to think why the Lord had instituted this ordinance. It is solid wisdom to study the will of God as far as it can be known; and so as to make it the rule of our temper and conduct. No one who has the revelation of God in his hands, has the shadow of an excuse to plead for his ignorance.

Secondly, they rush very presumptuously to this ordinance, who live in the habit of wilful sin.

The apostle reasons very conclusively when he says, speaking of an individual who violates

one of the commands of God, "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now, if thou commit no adultery, yet, if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law." (James ii. 10, 11.) It is impossible to live in the violation of any one of the commands of God, without insulting and in reality violating the whole law—a violation of the letter of every other command would be the certain consequence, if a temptation, equally strong, invited to the violation of it. God intended and requires that all his commands should be honoured, without one single exception. We are justified that we may be sanctified. The glory of the gospel is that it is destined to bring man to a perfect conformity to the law of God, and to keep him eternally in that conformity. Were it not so it would be no gospel. The glories of the gospel and of the law will evidently be involved in each other, as the primary colours of light are involved in the sun.

Thirdly, they do very wrong who approach the Lord's table under the influence of hatred, or the indulgence of an unforgiving disposition. The command is, "Be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." (Matt. v. 24.)

This law of love to our neighbour, is not studied, or its violation reprobated, as it should be. The breach of brotherly kindness involves

in it the violation of every command. He who hates his brother, hates God. It is impossible to love God without loving each other. But, as sin lives in the bosom of the believer, he may be tempted to the violation of this command; he may cherish an improper feeling towards a brother or a sister. Examine yourselves: is this the state of your hearts at the present moment? In the name of the living God, triumph over yourselves immediately; lay siege to a throne of grace, and suffer not God to rest till he has vouchsafed you the blessing of a forgiving disposition.

To guard alike against approaching the table of the Lord in a presumptuous, and in a thoughtless spirit, I shall now speak of that *preparation* which is necessary for worthily receiving the Lord's supper.

I hope that none will quarrel with the word preparation, and call it legality. The term legality is used by some professors of religion, first, to insult truth, and then to reject it. It behoves the minister of the gospel, however, to present his hearers with every part of truth, preceptive as well as promissory. To dwell incessantly on the love and mercy of God, and systematically to omit other truths, must have an injurious effect. When my Bible tells me, that "*all* Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness," (2 Tim. iii. 16,) how dare

I, or can I, with a clear conscience, neglect any portion of it ?

First, then, God commands us to prepare ourselves to meet him. Let us examine Scripture on this subject.

“ Upon the first day of the first month, began he (Ezra) to go up from Babylon, and on the first day of the fifth month came he to Jerusalem, according to the good hand of his God upon him. For Ezra *had prepared his heart* to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments.” (Ezra vii. 9, 10.) He *prepared himself* to lead the family of Israel into the presence of the living God. Hear what Samuel says to the Israelites : “ If ye do return unto the Lord with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, *and prepare your hearts unto the Lord*, and serve him only ; and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines.” (1 Sam. vii. 3.)

No wise man does any thing, be it what it may, without first, if I may so speak, throwing his intellect into it. Is thoughtlessness then to accompany man when he approaches God ? Are we, like some of the Israelites of old, to give him our lips only, while our hearts are wandering far from him ? We know, alas ! what it is to do this again and again. May God break our hearts by his Holy Spirit !

Secondly, the peril of approaching God with-

out due preparation is very great. Need I remind you of the fate of Aaron's sons, who came before the Lord with strange fire? They were visited with death, and their history is handed down to us, that we may be instructed and warned. God will be honoured by those whom he honours, and "he will honour those who honour him." Bear in mind, that unless we are preparing ourselves to meet the Lord, we are arming ourselves to fight against him. We must do the one or the other, there is no neutral ground to be occupied. May God write this truth in all our hearts, and teach us to make a wise and holy use of it!

Thirdly, God has been engaged from eternity in making provision for us, in preparing a sacrifice to be a feast for man; and which is to last to eternity; and when he invites us to meet him at his board, he invites us to receive at his hands, fully and freely what he has provided for us. Surely it is not much for us to give him the little time that we possess here below.

Lastly. We have a great work before us; we have to fight against the world, the flesh and the devil. We have every evil propensity that can possibly live within the human bosom; we have enemies internal and external; we must fight and conquer them. It is true, indeed, that God must teach our hands to war, and our fingers to fight; but it is equally true, that he must have our own services in our own salvation. "Work

out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do." (Phil. ii. 12, 13.) It is a great blessing to have the mind fixed on true and sound principles, and that we should be looking into, and watching over, the state of our hearts. It is God alone who can enable us to do it.

Self-examination then is absolutely necessary before we approach the Lord's table ; indeed there can be no spiritual honesty, where there is no self-examination. It lives in all its glory in heaven at the present moment. All who are there, wing their flight (if I may so speak) through themselves ; they are ceaselessly engaged in comparing all they think, and all they do, with a perfect rule ; and this they do with a delightful ease, of which we can form at present but a very inadequate idea. While I am stating this, let it be remembered—and God grant that it may prove an awful, yet salutary warning—self-examination must take place. Sooner or later we must enter each into the inmost recesses of his own bosom. All in hell are obliged to examine themselves. These are truths founded in the very nature of things. May we pause over them, and ask ourselves this question, Is it not solid wisdom to begin the work at the present moment, remembering that God is not only a God of justice, but a God of mercy too.

I may add to this, that there is, and must be in



us a proneness and a tendency to deceive ourselves. This is in the very nature of sin, and we shall not be free from this till we are free from sin; till we are holy as God is holy, and perfect as he is perfect. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" (Jer. xvii. 9.) Sin possesses, in the most exquisite perfection, the faculty of concealing its own deformity, so that we cannot see it as it is. We shall not see it as God sees it till we are removed to the distance of infinity and eternity from it: then, and not till then, shall we behold the monster, in all his terrible dimensions, as opposed to God, and opposed to the welfare of the creature.

But young persons may be disposed to ask, at what age they may be admitted to the Lord's supper. Perhaps the only answer to be given is this. As soon as they exercise the grace of repentance towards God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; when they have learned to examine themselves, they may approach the Lord's table. Our wise reformers have not specified any age, and for this simple reason—that they could not assign the exact period when the Divine Spirit might begin a work of grace within the human heart.

My young friends! do you feel the vast importance of the subject on which I am now dwelling? It necessarily involves either your eternal

ruin or your salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ. Remember the encouraging promise that is given : " They that seek me early shall find me." (Prov. viii. 17.) I feel deeply interested in calling your attention to this most momentous subject. If we wish to have any thing that is excellent, we lay hold of it when young. If we wish to bend a sapling, we do it when it is tender ; if we desire to train a brute, or tame the roaring lion or the savage tiger, we begin when they are young. Would you be an accomplished scholar or an eminent artist ? you must begin to learn in youth. This seems to be the plan of God himself. For the most part he lays hold of the young, and begins to teach them those truths that are destined to live in their bosoms for ever. Youth is the season eminently adapted for the cultivation of true religion. The human heart, then, (before bad habits are contracted, habits that harden the feelings into adamant,) is chosen of God to receive the seeds of divine truth, which shall spring forth and grow up as " trees of righteousness," to be transplanted from time to eternity, there to flourish for ever under the culture of his own hand.

I believe that those who are visited by God's grace late in life, though changed by Almighty power into his own image, seldom thrive in his courts like those upon whom he had laid his hand of mercy in their tender years. My young

friends, seek the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, while you are young. Do not consider repentance towards God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, simply and exclusively *as duties*, but *as blessings* provided for all who seek them in the covenant of grace. Seek them continually, and be determined not to receive a refusal. Let your importunity prevail over heaven itself; and remember that God delights to be triumphed over by the young who seek him.

The catechism presents us with an admirable summary of divine truth; what it says of self-examination is very precise, and very comprehensive. Let us, then, consider our meetness for this holy ordinance in the five following points: *faith, repentance, conscious unworthiness, brotherly love, and praise and thanksgiving.*

### I. FAITH.

“Without faith it is impossible to please God,” and, in those who partake of the Lord’s supper, it is absolutely necessary, for three obvious reasons.

1. Because unbelief rejects Christ. The unbeliever must therefore be an unworthy recipient of the bread and wine. The language of his heart is this: “I will not have this man to reign over me.” (Luke xix. 14.)

2. Unbelief is the parent of sin and hell: faith, on the contrary, is the parent of obedience. Unbelief rejects every thing that is good, and cleaves

to every thing that is evil. "Being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that *obey* him." (Heb. v. 9.)

3. None are enabled to receive the elements as memorials of the body and blood of Christ, but those who believe in him, and receive him as their Saviour.—The body and blood of Christ are received not literally, but spiritually; they are received by faith. The Bible is very clear on this head; and if we appeal to common sense, it echoes the testimony of scripture. The doctrine of transubstantiation involves in it not only a falsehood, but an impossibility; and I may add, the grossest blasphemy. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." (John vi. 53, 54.) The Saviour, when he thus spoke, was not with his disciples at the table of his own supper. He was addressing the multitude, and it was evidently his intention to be understood *spiritually*.

It has become the bounden duty of ministers of the gospel, more now than formerly, to point out the errors of popery. I shall therefore be excused for dwelling a few moments on this glaring absurdity.—You may have heard it said, even by Protestants, that Roman Catholics have the *letter* of Scripture in favour of their doctrine. If

this were so, their arguments would be good ; but the truth is, that the letter of scripture is as much against them as the spirit. “ The Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread : and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat ; this is my body which is broken for you ; this do in remembrance of me.” After the same manner also he took the cup when he had supped, saying, “ This cup is the New Testament in my blood ; this do ye as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.” Now mark ; “ For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come.” (1 Cor. xi. 23, 26.)

Bread *before* it was consecrated, bread *after* it was consecrated, according to the testimony of Christ !

Present circumstances render it absolutely necessary to expose and refute the ruinous absurdities of the church of Rome. Parents, and you who have the charge of children, I conjure you, in the name of the living God, to expose the absurdities of Popery to their youthful minds ; present them with pure truth ; contrast it with Popish error ; and bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

We come to the Lord’s supper, anticipating that strength and refreshment with which he himself has promised to bless us : “ My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.” (John

vi. 55.) We know the effects of food on our own constitution ; it was intended not only to strengthen, but also to refresh and exhilarate the human frame. Food never fully attains the end that God has in view, without producing a fine flow of spirits. Ask the physician, and he will tell you, that if it have not this ultimate effect, it is a proof that there is disease in the body. Apply this easy, obvious train of reasoning, to the case before us : we cannot do justice to the Lord's supper, unless we feel ourselves refreshed as well as strengthened. Figure to yourself, for a moment, a weary, way-worn traveller, stopping at some kind friend's house, and receiving every thing he requires ; he prosecutes his journey not only with new strength, but with fresh delight. We insult God, and impoverish our own souls, unless we seek our supreme pleasure in rejoicing in the Lord. We read in the book of Judges, of " wine that cheereth God and man." (Judges ix. 13.) Wine was used by the Jews of old, in their sacrifices, as typical of the blood of Christ. God is glorified, the sinner is blessed, and that blessing was intended to develope itself in joy.

Have I a lively faith in God's mercy ?

The idea is most happily conveyed in the Church Catechism. Perhaps the Book of Common Prayer is, as a composition, of all the books that ever came from the pen of man, next in value to the book of God. The fervour of its piety,



the easy elegance of its language, the beautiful simplicity of its sentiments, should make it highly prized by us.

1. A lively faith involves in it, Hungering and thirsting after God. “As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God,” says David: (Psal. xlii. 1 :) and again, “O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee; my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land where no water is;” (Psal. lxiii. 1;) and again, “My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?” (Psal. xlii. 2.) And do you and I know what it is to hunger and thirst after God? If so, we know what it is to enter into heaven, though we are at present on earth.

2. A lively faith connects itself with a lively hope. Faith lays hold of the truth of the promise, and immediately consigns it to hope; hope uncloses it, and takes possession of the treasure. As glory is grace in perfection, so grace is glory in its infancy. He who has faith and hope, has heaven within him at the present moment. We have naturally all the elements of hell within us: when born of God we have all the elements of heaven.

3. A lively faith sacrifices every thing for God, however dear it may be. Wife, children, every thing must go, if the Lord says, “give them to

me." We have some noble instances of the self-denial of the children of God in the early ages of Christianity, and we can never be sufficiently grateful to the Lord for having recorded them for our imitation. "And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds. Many of them also which had used curious arts, brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed." (Acts xix. 18—20.) It seems that they had been engaged in a very lucrative profession; but now they sacrificed every thing. We find exactly the same principle in Zaccheus.

Regeneration involves in it a principle of martyrdom, and this will live for ever. It was not in the flames that the martyrs of old first exemplified the principle of martyrdom; the flames only developed the strength of that principle. It consists in a disposition to sacrifice any thing, and every thing to the will of God. When the command came to Abraham to offer up his son Isaac, he did not hesitate a moment; he seemed to delight in it. Why? Because God commanded him. He was, at the same time, fully persuaded that God could, and would raise Isaac from the dead.

But you and I have friends and children dearer to us than Isaac was to Abraham! Perhaps you are surprised to hear this. I will tell you who

they are. Our *sins* are dearer to us than any thing—dearer than wife or children, soul or body: a man's dearest offspring are his sins. Is he disposed to part with these; to bind them together, raise an altar, and sacrifice them? Are you disposed to do so? This is true religion. This is what faith will do,—and what God intended should be done.

4. Faith is destined to soar above the good and the evil of time; to triumph over the smiles and frowns of the world, over Satan and all his machinations. The believer in this triumph is conformed to the image of his Master. He is destined to know himself and his enemies, that he may be made conversant with his friends for ever.

“Above all,” says the apostle, “taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.” (Eph. vi. 16.) Satan will tempt us to sin, and after he has done so, he will tempt us to despair. He will sometimes introduce the most blasphemous ideas into the imagination, while the distressed believer, sadly miscalculating the state of things, ascribes them all to himself, though, at the same time, he is opposing them in agony.

5. Faith delights in every thing lovely and of good report: in every thing that is pleasing to the eye of God. It was intended to be a very active principle: God grant that you and I may know

this from our own experience ! Spiritual sloth leads to spiritual disease. May God, of his infinite goodness, keep us all diligently, and delightfully engaged in his own work !

II. REPENTANCE. It is my intention now to point out a few things that are essential to true repentance.

1. Sorrow for sin. The apostle describes this in a singularly interesting manner : " Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation, not to be repented of : but the sorrow of the world worketh death." (2 Cor. vii. 10.)

Godly sorrow leads to the remedy—to the Saviour—to the salvation of God by him. This is what true repentance is ; it proves that it comes *from* heaven. Why ? It leads *to* heaven—to the Saviour—to God.

2. True repentance involves in it the confession of sin, and the forsaking of it likewise. Some will confess their sins, but will not forsake them. " He that covereth his sins shall not prosper." (Prov. xxviii. 13.)

There are special occasions, when it is absolutely necessary, to evince our integrity, that we should confess our sins to man as well as to God. " Confess your faults one to another," (James v. 16,) that is, the faults you have committed against each other. This is the command of God ; but this is far different from the Romish doctrine of

auricular confession. British fathers ! British brothers ! British sons ! is it right that your female relatives should deposit the secrets of their hearts in the bosom of a Roman priest ? I would rouse every feeling that inhabits your breasts against it. The very idea of auricular confession, and the forced celibacy of the clergy, impresses Popery with the broad seal of hell.

3. A spirit of prayer is essential to true repentance : real penitence delights in converse with God ; and is necessarily connected with the discovery of having found in God an infinitely glorious treasure.

The Lord said of Paul after his conversion, " Behold he prayeth." Paul had repeated prayers many times before, but now he is really engaged in prayer : now he converses with God. And is it so with us ? Have we discovered that we are ruining ourselves unless we converse with God ?

The richest instructions, the eloquence of God himself, cannot reach the heart without the influence of the Holy Ghost. Pray earnestly then for the Divine Spirit. He is omnipotent ; he can, and will teach you to approach God as you ought : you will then be conscious that you are going into the presence of an infinitely holy, wise, just, and merciful Being.

He who knows what sin is, and who, and what the Saviour is, will not rest till he is in possession

of the blessing. We should give God no rest till he has heard our prayers, and answered them by the establishment of his peace in our consciences, and the shedding abroad of his love in our hearts. "Sirs," said the jailor at Philippi, to the apostles of old, "what must I do to be saved?" (Acts xvi. 30.) "I have sinned," said holy Job, "what shall I do unto thee, O thou preserves of men? Why hast thou set me as a mark against thee, so that I am a burden to myself? And why dost thou not pardon my transgression, and take away mine iniquity?" (Job vii. 20, 21.) Hear him afterwards say, "I know that my Redeemer liveth." (xix. 25.)

4. True penitence produces not only a just, but a merciful disposition. An angel of light cannot receive the image of God in the glories with which we are destined to be blessed. Among other things, we have the image of his mercy, and he who is most merciful is most like God. Next to the bliss of receiving mercy at the hands of God, the bliss of bestowing it is the greatest. If you know what the blessedness of receiving mercy is, you will delight in imparting it. The human heart is expanded by Deity into dimensions, which none can calculate but God himself. May we know these things under the influence of his Holy Spirit, that Christ may be formed in us the hope of glory.

"He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good,"



—evidently in the Saviour: God cannot consistently with his perfections present us with any thing that is good, but in his Son. I can expect nothing but evil at the hands of the Lord, unless the eye of faith is fixed on the Saviour.—“And what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” (Mic. vi. 8.) We see this disposition exemplified in a very striking manner in Zaccheus, who was an instance of the effect of true religion on the human heart. “Zaccheus,” said the Saviour, “make haste and come down, for to-day I must abide at thy house. And he made haste and came down and received him joyfully. And when they saw it they all murmured, saying, that he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner.” The Saviour had taught Zaccheus to welcome him. “And Zaccheus stood and said unto the Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.” (Luke xix. 5, &c.)

God grant that we may possess the religion of Zaccheus! May the truth as it is in Jesus have the same effect on our hearts as it had on his!

5. True repentance leads us into covenant with God, and keeps us there. It is the offspring of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is in this world that we are taught the principles of action, that

are to develope themselves in habit before the throne of God; and we frequently pass through much bitter discipline; sometimes imagining that the work is not carried on at all, when, in reality, it is proceeding in the most effectual manner.

It is not absolutely necessary that we should experience sensible comforts, in order to ascertain the reality or the strength of our religion. No; it may thrive and flourish exceedingly when the soul is troubled. God may withdraw sensible comforts in a great measure, and suffer his child to feel the strength of sin; while, at the same time, he is opposing it with the arm of a giant. He is thus taught the lesson learned by an eminent saint of old: "By this I know that thou favourest me, because mine enemy doth not triumph over me." (Psa. xli. 11.) This discipline will evidently have a most happy issue, for it humbles man. He is taught to know himself, and in exact proportion to his self-knowledge, he honours and prizes the covenant of God. The command will soon be issued: "Gather my saints together unto me, those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice." (Ps. l. 5.)

6. Lastly, Consider what the fruits of repentance are in the tenor of the life. Paul, at the end of his Epistles, almost invariably points them out. Like a masterly divine, he begins with doctrine, proceeds to experience, and then shows what true religion is in the life. "Whatsoever

things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report ;—if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.” (Phil. iv. 8.)

III. CONSCIOUS UNWORTHINESS. The frequent cry of the timid soul is, ‘I am not worthy.’ And what do you think constitutes worthiness? A consciousness of your own *unworthiness* is the best and happiest frame of mind,—such a consciousness of it, as makes you incapable of living a single moment without the Saviour. Legality is, indeed, a subtle and a *mighty* enemy, the inhabitant of all our bosoms. We would heal ourselves, we would make ourselves innocent, and *then* go to Christ. No; this must not be. Many say, ‘My heart is not soft enough; I do not see and feel the evil of sin sufficiently.’ This is departing from the Saviour, not coming to him.

Take another view of the question. Is not the Lord Jesus Christ a Saviour from sin and all its consequences? What are our indifference to him, our deadness, our ignorance, but so many attributes of sin? He who has been better taught, when he beholds these enemies within his bosom, makes a wise and holy use of them as so many scorpions to sting him into the arms of Immanuel.

A consciousness of unworthiness is a very

great blessing, and the Saviour himself promises to bless those who possess it. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. v. 3.) This poverty of spirit evidently includes in it a consciousness of unworthiness. It is impossible, in the very nature of things, that true religion should live in any other spirit than this. I shall only quote one text of scripture. Where there is a disposition—the least disposition, see how it is met in the word of God. "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth, say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." (Rev. xxii. 17.) Here we have God and his church inviting sinners to bring all their unworthiness to the Saviour, and receive at his hands the gift of eternal life.

Humility is the greatest, the most essential beauty of all created being. Properly speaking, no one is great but God. All are infinitely little when contrasted with Deity. To be conscious of this littleness, and to delight and triumph in that God who makes us what we are, is, indeed, not only the beauty, but I may add, the bliss of the creature. Pride is the child of ignorance, and the first-born of hell: it is the essence of every sin that ever was committed, from the first transgression in heaven to the present day. Angels are necessarily very humble; they are acquainted with God, and with themselves. The

glorious intelligences who are in the presence of the Almighty, are represented as veiling their faces before the great God ; a holy shame of their best services seems to possess them, as if they would tell the Lord, "Thou art worthy—eternally worthy of infinitely more than we shall ever be able to present to thee."

It is the Lord's determination to humble the creature. We must, every one of us, either bow before the sceptre of the King of kings, or be trampled beneath the feet of his vengeance for ever. All finite being must be laid low : low in purity, in peace, and bliss ; or, low beneath the mighty hand of the vengeance of God.

Humility is not only the beauty of the believer, but it is an evidence that he is a believer ; an evidence not only to himself, but to others. "Lord," says the Psalmist, "what is man, that thou takest knowledge of him ? or the son of man, that thou makest account of him ?" (Ps. cxliv. 3.) We shall for ever be furnished with principles and motives to make us humble, which no other beings can possess. The consciousness of having been once sinful, is not a necessary ingredient in humility. The angels who have never violated the law of God are very humble ; but, to behold humility in all its glory, we must fix our eyes on the Saviour of mankind. Majesty infinitely higher than that of heaven ! Con-

descension (and that the condescension of Deity in the humility and humiliation of his humanity) descending lower than our hell !

In heaven, we shall contrast our own sinfulness in time, with what God has done for us in the person and work of his Son ; and, subsequently, by his Holy Spirit. These things will necessarily make us very humble, and keep us so for ever ; and (paradoxical as it may appear) we shall be exalted in exact proportion to our humility. Would you meet God in all the glory of his majesty, you must do it by humbling yourself. The proud creature not only rivals Deity, but attempts to usurp his crown. No wonder then, that the Lord tells us, that “ He beholdeth the proud afar off.”

#### IV. BROTHERLY LOVE.

It is impossible to love Christ without loving the brethren ; and loving the brethren is adduced, in scripture, as a proof of our love to Christ. Is it possible, I would ask, to love the glorious original, and to hate his image ? “ If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar ; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen ? ” (1 John iv. 20.) We give the strongest proof of our love to God and his Christ, in our love to each other. When did the Saviour give the most striking proof of his love to



God? When he gave the most convincing evidence of his love to man. When did he tell the universe that he loved his Father? When he informed it that he loved his brethren so well as to descend into the depths of their hell, that they might be raised to the heights of his heaven. It is in love to God—it is in love to Christ, and to each other, that we should approach his holy table; and let me add *merciful* table, as well as *holy*.

Are we, then, in perfect charity with all men? Do not suffer yourselves to be imposed upon; do not listen to any who would tell you that this is legality. I should be legal, indeed, if I were to substitute any thing you do, or any thing the Holy Spirit works within you, for the righteousness of Christ; but it is a most important truth, that we are justified, in order that we should be obedient to God. It would be inconsistent with the divine perfections to justify any individual, and then to suffer him to live in sin.

1. If I am in perfect charity with all men, I meditate no mischief against any of my brethren. “Let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart.” (Zech. vii. 10.) Here is a legislator who enters into the inmost recesses of the heart, and demands all its homage! I exhort you to meditate no evil, to cherish no bitterness against a brother, even for a moment. The religion of Jesus Christ is love: it flows from the love of God, in all its glory. The reign of Christ in the

human bosom is the reign of love ; the obedience is the obedience of love—love to God as well as to man.

2. Perfect charity with all men implies a delight in the welfare of our brethren. This delight is opposed in scripture to envy, which is emphatically said to be “ the rottenness of the bones ;” it torments the bosom of Satan himself at the present moment, and will continue to torment him for ever. The believer should not imagine evil against any : but it is not enough to rest satisfied with negatives ; positive good must inhabit the bosom of the child of God. This is true in the very nature of things—it is a truth which is likewise frequently dwelt upon in scripture. We are commanded, not to look on our own things, but also on the things of others. (Phil. ii. 4.)

3. The sorrows as well as the joys of our brethren become ours by sympathy. “ Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them.” (Heb. xiii. 3.) Consider them as bound for Christ. It is the Spirit of Christ that can alone produce these effects. We may see something like it in the amiabilities of the natural man. Enter a family tenderly attached to each other ; it is delightful to see husband and wife, brothers and sisters, so fondly united, that they cannot live at strife. One of this family is the subject of affliction, perhaps in the jaws of death ; all sym-

pathize with that one ; the hearts of all seem to be absorbed in the affliction of the afflicted. This was the case with Jesus. Need I remind you of his visit to Mary and Martha—of his tender sympathy—how he wept with those who wept, though he knew that he was about to raise Lazarus ? He participated first in their sorrow, and doubtless, afterwards in their joy.

As sympathy involves the joy, as well as the sorrow of our brethren, we make both of them our own. When we behold with delight the welfare of another, that welfare becomes ours. As envy corrodes within the bosom, and sometimes wears out the body as well as the mind, so delight in the welfare of another is a heaven in itself. In heaven, each is as fully engaged in the welfare of another as in his own. This is a perfection which God has provided for his family, and which, under his discipline, they shall possess and enjoy. It may appear wonderful to us now, that each should love others as he loves himself, but it certainly will be the case, or heaven could not be enjoyed.

4. We are not only to be humble before God, but humble before men. This, again, evinces the Spirit of Christ. The believer is full of self-diffidence, far more ready to hear what another has to say, than to say any thing himself. “ In honour preferring one another.” Does not this spirit evince its divine origin ? How opposed is it

to the spirit of the world ! When we look at man under the influence of his natural corruption, we see him endeavouring to trample upon his fellow-creatures, and this is not surprising, because it is a certain truth, that he tramples on the perfections of Deity. This is our natural principle ; how can we be sufficiently grateful to God who has planted within our bosoms another principle ! The believer's ambition is to be humble, not to be great ; to exalt others above himself, not himself above others. Whence could this principle come but from God ?

5. Perfect charity involves in it a disposition, first, to forgive, and then to serve, our bitterest enemies. This was the disposition enjoined under the Old Testament dispensation, for the words which are used in the New Testament are quoted from the Old : " If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat ; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink : for thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the Lord shall reward thee." (Prov. xxv. 21, 22.) These coals are the fire that descends from heaven. Natural men heap the coals of hell upon each other, only to consume and destroy ; but this is a divine fire, that is heaped upon the head of an enemy to melt him into love.

I have thus glanced at the disposition which must be possessed by every child of God. It is not only necessary that we should be perfect

before God, in the righteousness of his Son ; but also, that we should be eventually and for ever righteous in principle ; and, thanks be to God, he has provided the means for conferring the blessing. We are here for a season, that under the discipline of the Most High, principle may be strengthened into habit, and that every evil principle and evil habit may be destroyed. Well then may we examine our own principles, and prepare to meet the Lord. We must, indeed, have this preparation, and he has promised that we shall have it. He has promised to carry on what he has begun : “ Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God which worketh in you to will and to do of his good pleasure.” (Phil. ii. 12, 13.)

May we then be thus prepared by God, and by ourselves for God ! May God, of his infinite goodness and mercy, make us conscious of it, and then to approach the Lord’s table will be most delightful. He has engaged to meet his family there, and while they are receiving the elements by faith in him, to bless them with the glorious reality, with the Saviour himself in all his glory, as the immortal food of their immortal souls !

V. PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING.—It has been often observed, that perfect adoration must involve in it ceaseless praise. All in heaven at the present time are engaged in praising God, and

ever will be thus employed. The soul is never truly happy here, but in proportion as it is enabled to praise God. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name! Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits!" And then the psalmist proceeds to enumerate these benefits: "who forgiveth all thine iniquities"—forgiveth! that is the first thing; and then, "who healeth all thy diseases." He goes on, "who redeemeth thy life from destruction: who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies: who satisfieth thy mouth with good things, so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's." (Ps. ciii.1—5.) Happy are those who cannot live without praising God! Of them it may be emphatically said, that they live in the vestibule of heaven. When the period of dissolution arrives, they will have nothing to do but to pass from time into eternity. Their journey will be short and straight, as the arrow's flight, from themselves to the bosom of a covenant God,—to the mansions of eternal bliss.

Let us now, in the last place, consider the BLESSINGS conferred on us as children of the Most High.

1. We have Christ as a sacrifice; and God, in Christ, as a Father. The consciousness of this blessing is imparted by the Divine Spirit in the obedience of the child. You remember what the



Saviour said to his disciples just before he left them : “ Let not your heart be troubled ; ye believe in God ; believe also in me.” (John xiv. 1.) There is a strikingly instructive truth in these words. He was about to leave them ; and what was to be their comfort and consolation ?—peace of conscience. And in whom, and upon what, was that to be founded ?—on the Saviour himself, in his sacrificial glory.

2. Forgiveness of sin, and renovation of the immortal spirit by God himself. “ Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.” (Gal. iii. 13.) “ Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.” (Rom. iii. 25.)

3. Justification, and adoption into the family of heaven. Access to God in his Son, and an interest in his intercession before the throne of God, are among the blessings provided in the covenant ; and these truths are peculiarly encouraging to the child of God—indeed he requires them in his intercourse with Heaven. “ Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.” (1 Cor. i. 30.) And again : “ Through him we both” (Jew and Gentile) “ have access by one spirit unto the Father.” (Eph. ii. 18.) And what does the apostle tell us in his epistle to the

Hebrews ? “ He is also able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.” (Heb. vii. 25.)

4. The believer, in approaching the Lord's table, looks by faith to a God of providence. He looks up to God for all the temporal mercies that he needs ; he looks to him also for the influence of his Holy Spirit, to preserve him every moment ; to direct him to the Saviour ; and to enable him to run the race that is set before him, with increasing alacrity, and growing delight.

The Holy Spirit was given under the Old Testament dispensation, and has been given to the true worshippers of God in all ages ; but it is peculiarly the promise of the Christian economy, of which we have abundant testimony. When a new heart is promised, the Spirit is promised to produce the new principle, and to preserve it alive for evermore.

Lastly ; in approaching his table we come to God for the fulfilment of *all* his promises ; for all blessings, temporal and spiritual, here below ; and for a glorious resurrection hereafter, the reunion of a glorified soul and glorified body, to worship God without the least alloy of evil, through the countless ages of eternity. We look to him, in the exercise of faith, for every thing he has provided for us. May his Holy Spirit lead

us to himself, and may we meet the King of kings at his own table !

Come then—I invite all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ—all who believe in him—I invite them to his table. Is there any one disposed to shrink from coming? I would ask this solemn, respectful, and affectionate question : Is it, my brother, is it, my sister, your honest desire to triumph over every sin in principle as well as in practice, and to be found before God for ever in the image and righteousness of his Son Jesus Christ? If so, then in the name of the living God, I invite you to his table. I not only invite, but conjure you to approach. I not only conjure you to come, but I would remind you that, in keeping away, you are treating the Saviour with the greatest ingratitude. We seldom act towards our earthly friends as we do towards him. If some kind friend, on the day of death, makes a request of us, we treat his dying wishes with a kind of religious respect—nothing can induce us to break them. And shall we neglect the last injunction of the Saviour? shall we be inattentive to him when he says, “This do in remembrance of me?”

I now imagine to myself an individual under the influence of the divine Spirit, drawing near to the table of the Lord. If asked what he had in view, he would say ; ‘I approach it in love and

gratitude to that God who sent his Son to die for me, and to redeem me from the wrath to come—to that Saviour, who gave his life a ransom for mine, and to that Holy Spirit, who has taught me to prize that Saviour infinitely above all other beings, and all other things. I approach it to renew my covenant with God, determined, no longer in my own strength, but in his, to devote myself entirely to his service. This is my desire. It is true I am compassed with infirmities—my iniquities are more in number than the hairs of my head: but it is equally true that I am opposing my sin, and that God is within me opposing it likewise. I am conscious that I shall not come into condemnation; my sins are forgiven, for they are being subdued.'

Another reason for his approaching the Lord's table is to be assured of his interest in Christ.

Have you always known this?—No; but I have kept it in view. Do you know it now?—Yes, I do. I approached the Lord's table before I had this assurance of hope. "I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." (2 Tim. i. 12.) Do not imagine that there is in real assurance any presumption. The assurance of hope is full of humility; it humbles the believer in exact proportion as it exalts him. He says to himself, 'I know that Jesus has loved me, and given him-

self for me. He has forgiven my sin. He has taught me to love him, and to hate sin and every thing that is opposed to his holy will.' This is the experience of him who has within his bosom the assurance of hope.

Again, he approaches the Lord's table to eat the flesh, and drink the blood of the Son of God; in other words, to receive of his fulness every moment, till he has bid an eternal farewell to the things of time and sense. Eating and drinking the flesh and blood of the Son of God, evidently include a reception of all the blessings that are treasured up in him, in the exercise of faith :—a righteousness to justify from every charge; a Spirit to strengthen for all sufferings, for every good work. He comes to be blessed with every spiritual blessing in Christ Jesus the Lord.

The promise of God was to this effect when the church was in its infancy : we have it at the present day. "In all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee." (Exod. xx. 24.) Heaven and earth shall pass away, but his words shall not pass away.

Happy people who thus approach the table of the Lord !

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